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CHAPTER 14

From Survival Mode to Utopian Dreams: Conceptions of Society, Social Planning, and Historical Time in 1950s and 1960s Finland

Sophy Bergenheim

Introduction

During the two decades following the Second World War, Finnish society underwent drastic changes. It evolved from an underdeveloped agrarian society to a post-industrial and urbanized society. The period also marks Finland's social development from a state offering hardly any statutory, national-level social insurance to an internationally recognized Nordic welfare state with comprehensive public social and health care services.

In this chapter, I look at how experiences of the changing Finnish society and social state were reflected in the conceptions and actions of a prominent non-governmental organization, the Finnish Social Policy Association (SPA, in Finnish: *Sosiaalipoliittinen yhdistys*). During the research period, it was an organization specialized in social, economic, and

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labor market policy, with mainly high-level activities in politics and research. The individuals discussed in the text were board members of the SPA who partook in the association's planning debates. They were members of the society's intellectual elite, multifaceted actors in social and public policy with current or previous positions as high-ranking civil servants at the Ministry of Social Affairs, social scientists, ministers, and holders of key roles in social and health policy associations. The material consists of the board members' books and articles targeted at wide audiences, from scholars and students in social sciences, civil servants, and decision-makers, to laypeople. Both the organization and its key people were thus highly influential in defining the scope and direction of national social policies. A particularly well-known demonstration of this impact is the book *Social Policy for the Sixties*,[1] written by Pekka Kuusi and published by the SPA, which has gained a cult-like status in the historical narrative of the Finnish welfare state.

I approach my topic by applying and illustrating the analytical concept *presents past*. It is inspired by Reinhart Koselleck's idea of "futures past," which refers to the shifting experience of time in modernizing societies since the eighteenth century, as ever-accelerating change caused a discrepancy between experiences of the past ("space of experience") and expectations for the future ("horizon of expectation").[2] *Presents past*, on the other hand, is a more general concept that refers to an actor's experience and understanding of their shared reality in their contemporary present. It can thereby also be used as a tool for exploring and contextualizing historical events as *historical presents* (*lived* presents, if you will), each with their specific situational relationships with the past and the future. This endeavor entails analyzing the intrinsic, taken-for-granted cultural, discursive, and institutional premises of the lived present, as well as the actors' space of experience and horizon of expectation. In other words, it involves the examination of how the past of their present was understood, explained, and given meaning, and what was expected (assumed, feared, or anticipated) of the future—and how these temporal perspectives were related.[3]

[1] Kuusi, P. (1961). *60-luvun sosiaalipolitiikka*. WSOY.

[2] Koselleck, R. (2004). *Futures past: On the semantics of historical time*. Columbia University Press.

[3] For a similar abstract and general interpretation of Koselleckian historical times, see Jordheim, H. (2012). Against periodization: Koselleck's theory of multiple temporalities. *History and Theory* 51(2), 151–171.

In this chapter, I trace three historical presents. Each represents a specific conception of society reflected in notions of social and economic policy, state intervention, and planning. I tap into the past presents by analyzing the spaces of experience and horizons of expectations, including how conceptions of the past were reflected outlooks on the future. In mapping out past presents and spaces of experience, in particular, I highlight aspects and interpretations of the historical context that are relevant specifically to the actors' ideas and conceptions. In other words, I am not outlining an exhaustive general account of events, developments, and discourses in Finland, but instead point to the facets that were important in the actors' subjective lived present.

In my approach, I also apply conceptual historical analysis by examining meanings attributed to the concepts of society and planning. I pay particular attention to, firstly, expressions that present the past or the future in an explicitly negative or positive light; secondly, normative expressions, that is, "should" and "must" claims about the nature and purpose of policies (e.g., "social policy should be targeted at the working class"); and thirdly, depoliticizing expressions that stifle and obscure alternatives, such as "necessity," "the only way," or "unavoidable."

A note on historical concepts and their translations is also in order. Many Finnish political-institutional terms have precise and explicit conceptual-ideational references. For example, Finnish terminology distinguishes between "societal" (*yhteiskunta-*) and "social" (*sosiaali-*), often denoting a specific hierarchy and/or operating environment. The SPA's actors outlined the role of well-planned social policy within the grander schemes of "societal" policy and planning, entailing two distinct levels and areas of planning and policy, respectively. Such rhetorical references are easily lost in translation, especially with vague or ambiguous blanket terms like "public" or "social," which are not used consistently. The conventional English translation of "societal policy" (*yhteiskuntapolitiikka*) is "*public* policy," whereas "societal planning" (*yhteiskuntasuunnittelu*) usually translates to "*social* planning." The English dual use of "social" obscures the distinction between society and the social sub-realm, making it difficult to denote these distinct levels, for example, distinguishing between "social planning" (*sosiaalisuunnittelu*), related to social policy (*sosiaalipolitiikka*), and "societal planning," which encompasses both social and other forms of public planning. "Public," on the other hand, does away with the spelled out and specific reference to the society (akin to using the ambiguous "public health" as a translation of the Nordic

term, literally "people's health"[4]). Since such linguistic references are key to analyzing historical concepts and their ideas, I hereinafter use non-established translations in accordance with the original terms in Finnish. In addition to "societal" and "social," I strive to maintain the original literal references to entities like "state," "nation," and "country." My source material includes one work in English;[5] direct citations of course follow its original wording.

Present Past: A Postwar Society Walking a Tightrope (Early 1950s)

Early 1950s Finland—a nation burdened by postwar reconstruction and the other repercussions of the Second World War—was not particularly receptive to planning ideas. Non-socialists in particular were wary of the very concept of planning due to its connotations of planned economy, socialism, and socialization. Attitudes were certainly not softened by the reality of state intervention in a society abiding by postwar rationing policies.[6] One of the vocal opponents was Nils Meinander, Professor of National Economy and Vice Chair of the SPA, who proclaimed it was "by definition impossible for a planned economy and democracy to work in unison."[7]

The imbalanced relationship between Finland and Sweden is a prevalent feature in inter-Nordic dynamics: The more developed Sweden paved the way, and the underdeveloped Finland followed along the same path in due course. In principle, this applied to planning as well. In practice, however, since Finland was not under Scandinavian-style social democratic hegemony, planning ideals and models fueled by the ethos of state-led

[4] Bergenheim, S., Edman, J., Kananen, J., and Wessel, M. (2018). Conceptualising public health: An introduction. In J. Kananen, S. Bergenheim, and M. Wessel (eds.), *Conceptualising public health: Historical and contemporary struggles over key concepts*. Routledge, 1–17.

[5] Kuusi, P. (1964). *Social policy for the sixties: A plan for Finland*. Finnish Social Policy Association.

[6] Saloniemi, A. (1996). Suunnitteluoptimistit Suomessa: Näkökohtia tulevaisuuden suunnittelusta sotien jälkeen. In P. Kettunen, R. Parikka, and A. Suoranta (eds.), *Äänekäs kansa*. Työväen historian ja perinteen tutkimuksen seura, 91–103, 91.

[7] Tiihonen, S. (1985). *Valtioneuvosto koordinoijana: Teoria ja käytäntö vuosina 1939–1956*. Valtiovarainministeriön järjestelyosasto, 232.

social reformism were not as eagerly received. Instead, Finland came to focus only on planning for the immediate postwar transition period.[8]

In the non-socialist past present of the early 1950s, the space of experience was thus colored by a dissonance between neoclassical principles and the reality of controlled economy during and after the war. There was thus not much ideational and political room for planning-oriented ideas and discourses. The war further consolidated this setting, but wartime rationalization also contributed to the foundations for future societal planning ideas. According to Pauli Kettunen, wars served as institutional and legitimating frameworks for constructing specific issues as social problems that needed to be solved in specific ways. He links the rationale of these problem-formulations to the relationship between the space of experience and the horizon of expectation, which were likewise impacted by war. In this context, economic rationalization, efficient organization of labor, social integration, and individual self-discipline were framed as intertwined national necessities and responsibilities. This also legitimized the state's role as coordinator. Maintaining and improving competitiveness through rationalization policies was presented as a national necessity also after the war, which contributed to the relatively stronger position of Finnish employers and companies compared to their Swedish and Norwegian counterparts.[9] Wartime thus had a paradoxical effect on Finland: The small state came out of it holding even less territory to its name, yet also stronger, better organized, and with more extensive governing powers than ever before.[10]

In the early 1950s, the planning gaze was directed first and foremost at the economy. The dominant view in Finland was rooted in neoclassical economics, arguing that state intervention should be kept at a minimum

[8] Paavonen, T. (2006). Talouden kehitys ja talouspolitiikka hyvinvointivaltion kaudella. In T. Paavonen and O. Kangas, *Eduskunta hyvinvointivaltion rakentajana*. Suomen eduskunta, 9–187, 36.

[9] Kettunen, P. (2018). Wars, nation and the welfare state in Finland. In H. Obinger, K. Petersen, and P. Starke (eds.), *Warfare and welfare: Military conflict and welfare state development in Western countries.* Oxford University Press, 260–289; Kettunen, P. (1997). *Työjärjestys: Tutkielmia työn ja tiedon poliittisesta historiasta*. Tutkijaliitto, 92–96, 161–165; Kettunen, P. (1994). *Suojelu, suoritus, subjekti: Työsuojelu teollistuvan Suomen yhteiskunnallisissa ajattelu- ja toimintatavoissa*. Suomen Historiallinen Seura. Cf. the Swedish development, see Andersson, J. (2003). *Mellan tillväxt och trygghet: Idéer om produktiv socialpolitik i socialdemokratisk socialpolitisk ideologi under efterkrigstiden*. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis.

[10] Aunesluoma, J. (2011). *Vapaakaupan tiellä: Suomen kauppa- ja integraatiopolitiikka maailmansodista EU-aikaan*. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 142.

and economic policy likewise ought to remain passive. Legitimate state intervention was limited to monetary policy and price and wage regulation. In the early 1950s, neoclassical ideas in the public discourse were gradually challenged by Keynesian ideas on economic policy, advocating economic growth through counter-cyclical fiscal and social policies that maintained full employment. As a comparative shorthand, the ideologies could be characterized as "conservative" and "dynamic," respectively.[11]

Comprehensive and counter-cyclical social policy entailed state initiative, which of course was incompatible with conservative economic policy. The latter was instead bedfellows with conservative social policy: narrowly targeted measures designed and implemented within and contingent upon the national economy's limits, and/or actions for reconciling conflicting interests in the name of the greater—often national—good.[12] The main interest groups in Finnish society had traditionally consisted of the agrarian population (smallholders, in particular) and the working class. In 1940, the central federations of employers' organizations and trade unions recognized each other as negotiating parties in industrial relations, which facilitated the development of collective bargaining.

In the SPA, the ethos was dominated by conservative ideas. Meinander and fellow board member Niilo Mannio, by day Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Social Affairs, argued that especially a poor state like Finland should give precedence to workers' social insurance in its social policy. A system encompassing "unproductive citizens" would be unfeasible, as it yielded a slow return but required immediate spending, Meinander claimed. Mannio was discombobulated by universalist policies, such as the recently introduced child and maternal allowances (1948 and 1949, respectively), which he perceived as "theoretical peculiarities."[13]

Heikki Waris, the SPA's chair and recently appointed first professor of social policy in Finland, approached the issue from two angles: He stressed that exceeding the limits of the economy was ultimately counterproductive for social policy itself, and he warned against conjuring an image of a "social policy state" with deep pockets:[14]

[11] Tiihonen (1985), 185, 191.

[12] Kettunen (2018), 25–26.

[13] Meinander, N. (1951). Sosiaalipolitiikan kansantaloudelliset rajat. *Sosiaalinen aikakauskirja* 34(3), 255–268, quote on p. 266; Mannio, N. A. (1952). Sosiaaliturvajärjestelmämme kehittäminen. *Sosiaalinen aikakauskirja* 35(4), 451–460, quote on pp. 456–457.

[14] Waris, H. (1951). Sosiaalisen tasauksen pyrkimys: Nykyajan sosiaalipolitiikan kehityssuunnasta. *Suomalainen Suomi* 19(8), 453–459, 457–458.

> Receiving all these social benefits from the state (or municipality) easily leads to an understanding that the modern social policy state is akin to a benevolent old granny with unlimited funds, who always supports the children without ever demanding anything in return, nor receiving repayment. The emergence of this kind of 'aid mentality' constitutes, at all times, a morally weakening factor in social support systems, and the further this gratis receipt is expanded, the more impending its moral peril becomes.[15]

Fairness was a perpetual concern pertaining to comprehensive social policy. Meinander pointed to several interconnected perspectives. Firstly, social spending had to be collected from the incomes of other members of society. Secondly, social policy increased the recipients' purchasing power, which respectively meant curtailing purchasing power elsewhere in order to curb inflation. The legitimacy of social policy would eventually erode, as at some point—"long before attaining perfect balance in income redistribution"—"the opposition to reducing purchasing power becomes insurmountable."[16] According to Waris, this was a cue for science-based knowledge: It should be used for determining not only the economic impact of redistributive measures, but also their scope in relation to "striking a balance between social justice and individual liberties."[17]

The economic and hierarchical restraints imposed on social policy were thus justified by its seemingly innate moral pitfalls. Social policy was seen as a society-wide zero-sum game: Reducing social inequalities by improving the wellbeing of some citizens essentially entailed encroaching on the liberties of others. Those who received or needed society's support thereby posed a direct threat to better-off members of society. In this framing, the societal legitimacy of social policy was precarious, to say the least.

Keeping social spending in check was hence both an economic and moral question. This dilemma also made some way for planning, despite its negative connotations. Finding the most cost-effective solutions and avoiding unintentional negative effects (like inflation) were seen as pragmatic necessities; furthermore, maintaining the fragile balance of the legitimacy of social policy was deemed at least equally important. Nevertheless, the same neoclassical principles applied to social policy and social planning. Their potential for serving the common good was cautiously recognized, but state intervention was nonetheless perceived as inevitably

[15] Ibid., 458.
[16] Meinander (1951), 266.
[17] Waris (1951), 459.

infringing on individual autonomy and liberties—a prominent and problematic feature in the postwar space of experience.

After enduring the misery of war, material scarcity, and controlled economy, the horizon of expectation had a narrow and tight focus: Postwar reconstruction and getting Finland back on its feet, both domestically and internationally, was the highest priority. A key objective in this vision was to boost the national economy. Despite the determined focus, the postwar horizon of expectation was fragile, restrained, and restricted to the near future. There was no room for economic or moral risks that could disturb the intertwined and precarious trajectories of reconstruction, economic growth, and social balance.

As the 1940s turned into the 1950s, a light touch of Keynesianism was introduced to the national social policy discourse, namely, a notion that social policy did not necessarily constitute a mere burden for the national economy, but comprehensive social policy could even support economic growth.[18] This was probably partially rooted in the Swedish conception of a strong society, which had dominated the public discourse since the early 1950s.[19] This approach had, however, not been adopted in the SPA. In addition to advocating conservative, targeted social policy, Meinander and Mannio harbored conflicting views on planning. While planned economy was unanimously shunned in the association, long-term plans were nonetheless deemed necessary for curbing social policy's susceptibility to becoming embroiled in opportunistic interest-group politicking. Meinander and Mannio further recognized the importance of the preliminary fiscal assessments of social policy's economic impacts. However, the potential of systematic planning was undermined by cumulative difficult-to-predict impacts and effects, like inflation.[20] In accordance with the restricted horizon of expectation, the safest bet was therefore sticking to conservative social policy and avoiding disruptions to economic growth. Granted, ensuring that this principle was indeed implemented required methodical and systematic approaches—however, this was not perceived as planning in and of itself.

[18] Tiihonen (1985), 234.

[19] See, for example, Andersson (2003), 32–34; Kettunen, P. (2019a). Conflicting interests and science-based planning in the making of the welfare state. In R. Rubens and M. Van Dyck (eds.), *Sartoniana (Volume 32)*. Sarton Chair of History of Sciences, Ghent University, 171–189.

[20] Mannio (1952); Meinander (1951).

Nevertheless, neither Mannio nor Meinander perceived comprehensive social policy as a categorically undesired development. However, whereas the Swedish confidence in a strong society constructed a symbiotic relationship between economic growth, increased wellbeing, and comprehensive social policy,[21] Meinander and Mannio perceived the relation as markedly more hierarchical:

> [E]fforts to enlarge the cake nowadays yield significantly better results, even if the slices are of rather uneven size, than efforts to distribute it evenly, whereby the primary focus should be on the former.[22]

Waris, for his part, believed that comprehensive social policy with universalist features undermined important social and moral virtues, like initiative, self-responsibility, and joint solidarity toward the weakest members of the community. He emphasized the societal importance of instilling Bildung and moral qualities in the people, in which voluntary organizations played a key role.[23] Waris' societal conception reflected both professional and personal aspects. His multifaceted role in social policy included activities in several central non-governmental organizations, and the societal role of civic organizations was in flux as statutory public welfare started to expand in the 1940s. Waris was also a devout Lutheran. From the perspective of Lutheranism, disconnecting morality and spirituality from social relations appeared a significant threat.[24] The concern was also related to Waris' admonitions against the conceptions of a lavish social state.

According to the somewhat concerned consensus of the SPA, citizens did not possess an unquestioned right to demand services from the state; rather, the state stood at the citizen's service in accordance with its own prerequisites. The state had the right and *responsibility* to prioritize and target its services, and citizens respectively were responsible for

[21] Andersson (2003), 35.

[22] Meinander (1951), 268.

[23] Waris (1951), 458–459.

[24] Waris had argued for collective responsibility in a similar vein in his 1950 article "Our society in a period of transition," Waris, H. (1950b). Murrosajan yhteiskuntamme. *Suomalainen Suomi* 18(6), 327–332. On the role of Lutheranism for Waris' social policy views and activities, see Lindberg, H. (2015). Lutheranism and welfare state expertise: The example of Heikki Waris. *Perichoresis* 13(2), 97–113; Jalava, M. and Rainio-Niemi, J. (2018). European small-state academics and the rise of the United States as an intellectual center: The cases of Halvdan Koht and Heikki Waris. In M. Jalava, S. Nygård, and J. Strang (eds.), *Decentering European Intellectual Space*. Brill, 165–194.

themselves. State and society nonetheless formed a community, whereby social policy was also a matter of common good. However, there was little leeway, as the gain of one group entailed a loss for another—in economic as well as moral terms.

Present Past: Societal Chaos and Pre-Emptive Societal Planning (Mid-1950s)

In 1954, Heikki Waris held a presentation at the University of Helsinki entitled "Societal planning: To plan or not to plan?" Reflections on the differences, benefits, and harms between planning and not planning were ignited, in particular, by the present time "when a controlled wartime economy and a number of regulations are being dismantled." According to Waris, refraining from planning implied a liberalist conception of capitalism. The discourse had "gladly and constantly" revolved around an apparatus of "free competition and free price formation," which automatically and self-correctively sought a natural state of harmony, provided it was not disturbed—particularly by state intervention. The free-market economy continued to be held in high social regard in the "so-called *crème de la crème* of society" and academia, Waris maintained.[25]

Regardless, Waris deemed that the liberalist notion of free-market equilibrium had been called into question already during the First World War. Non-fiscal factors, like the war economy and technological advances, had increasingly often become decisive factors. Furthermore, along with the expanding trade union movement and the 1930s Depression, the economically invigorating effect of mass unemployment appeared less credible; instead, full employment and social reforms came to the fore. Even capitalist countries had "willingly or unwillingly transitioned to societal planning, to consciously and systematically outlining future developments." However, this development was not unequivocally positive, Waris maintained. The accelerating technological development spurred by natural sciences had rendered society more dynamic and more difficult to control, which strained societal institutions and social relations. Societal planning based on the empirical social sciences presented itself as a central

[25] Waris, H. (1954). Yhteiskunnan suunnittelu: Suunnittelu vai suunnittelemattomuus? *Suomalainen Suomi* 22(1), 13–18, 13.

means for confronting the challenges brought on by the "triumphant march of technology."[26]

In the mid- and late 1950s, a societal conception based on broad societal planning began to rival conservative ideas at the SPA. Unintentional and unwanted developments were still the main concern, but in contrast to the latter's uneasy relation with planning, the newer conception was based on firm confidence in science-based societal planning as the most effective way—if not the only way—to prevent chaos in societal policy.

The new approach was explained by the space of experience—namely, societal unrest in the mid-1950s. State-led economic regulation was dismantled abruptly and unplanned in 1955, which set in motion a chaotic avalanche of events, culminating in a general strike in March 1956. During spring 1956, Parliament also passed a notable pension reform. Its twists and turns were entangled in the same factors as the general strike, and the end result was a radical universalist reform that left all parties involved unhappy—a scheme that tripled expenditure, yet still paid out meager pensions.[27]

Recession and unemployment continued to burden the economy, and 1957 was dominated by financial crisis. The government in office, in which Meinander held the thankless portfolio of Minister of Finance, attempted to remedy the situation by declaring temporary national insolvency and postponing child allowance payments, though ultimately in vain.[28]

Rampant social spending was the hot topic of fall 1957. The SPA partook in the public discussion by organizing a debate. The event was kicked off by Pekka Kuusi, an up-and-coming hotshot sociologist and Heikki Waris' protégé, who promptly addressed the issue in his talk "Can our social expenditure be decreased." Kuusi's depoliticizing vocabulary hammered home the message: Social policy was in "undeniable" crisis because social expenditure was not adapted to the economy. The national pension reform and child allowances were represented as cautionary examples and the main culprits. Kuusi posited that increasing the national income was

[26] Ibid., quotes on pp. 14 and 17.

[27] Bergenheim, S. (2013). *Sosiaalivakuutus politiikan näyttämönä: Sosiaalidemokraattien ja maalaisliiton ristiriidat sosiaalivakuutuksen synnyssä ja kehityksessä 1927–1964.* Master's Thesis. University of Helsinki, 68–89.

[28] Kangas, O. (2006). Politiikka ja sosiaaliturva Suomessa. In T. Paavonen and O. Kangas (eds.), *Eduskunta hyvinvointivaltion rakentajana*. Edita, 190–366, 297–298; Uljas, P. (2012). *Hyvinvointivaltion läpimurto*. Into Kustannus, 162–170.

the most "natural" and, in fact, "the only way" to retrench relative social expenditure and, respectively, to expand social policy. Until then, Kuusi resolutely demanded, "Stop the expansion of social policy now!"[29]

Kuusi's conception of the relationship between social and economic policy hence resembled the conservative ideas of the SPA and was well received by Mannio and Meinander. Meinander, in particular, perceptibly embittered by the child allowance episode, vocally expressed his stance that swollen social expenses were to blame for the financial crisis. Arguments in favor of child allowances and preventative dynamic social policy were met with snide remarks about "wishful social policy thinking" that overlooked "economic realities." Meinander claimed there was no escaping the fact that comprehensive social policy was detrimental to the economy and hence irresponsible in the long term. The hierarchy was crystal clear: "Social policy is, after all, merely an important part of economic policy."[30]

Kuusi, however, did not agree with Meinander's formulation, but perceived economic and social policy as distinct aspects of a larger societal whole. Kuusi also differed from the conservative conceptions of the SPA's veterans in his take on planning, namely, that political gambling and fumbling in the dark resulted from too *little* planning and intervention. He thus echoed the conception of his mentor, Waris—that comprehensive planning was a crucial means for managing social policy and preventing undesired developments—and pointed out that unplanned ad hoc solutions also included measures fueled by a crisis mentality. Instead, Kuusi appealed to the SPA and its responsibility to "set social policy knowledge straight," which was a prerequisite for long-term planning.[31]

The polemic "retrenchment debate" of 1957 crystallized two differing conceptions of the relationship between social and economic policy. Instead of seeing social policy as a sub-field of economic policy, Kuusi and Waris positioned it as its own policy field. Both views nonetheless shared the basic premise that social policy should function expediently and in harmony with economic policy, and comprehensive social policy was deemed detrimental. In other words, the SPA had still not been influenced by dynamic ideas. Instead, the key difference was planning, as the newer discourse constructed an inherent link between social policy and planning.

[29] Kuusi, P. (1958). *Voidaanko sosiaalimenojamme supistaa*. Helsingin yliopisto.

[30] Ibid., 13–22, quotes on pp. 14, 17, 21.

[31] Ibid., 23.

The reserved and conflicted notion of planning was thus complemented by a positivist confidence—or hope—that social policy could become a predictable, manageable, and rational, science-based policy field. While social policy was still perceived as a threat to economic growth, science-based (and -legitimized) state intervention was now presented as a risk management tool in a modernizing society.

The rivaling ideas indicated a change in temporal conceptions, namely, regarding how a looming societal future could be controlled. The planning-oriented approach was not deterred by challenges in assessing impact; on the contrary, it further motivated the production of empirical and systematic knowledge in order to transform the unknown and threatening into the predictable and manageable.

When the rector of the University of Helsinki called for a discussion on the opportunities of "democratic planning" (cf. its socialist counterpart, "total planning"), Kuusi eagerly responded by writing an article entitled "On the opportunities of controlled societal policy" (1956). He made a trenchant remark that excessive planning was not a marked concern, seeing as the entire pension reform process had proven quite the opposite.[32] Waris, for his part, saw that the highly dynamic nature of modern society posed a risk for the emerging ethos and praxis of societal planning, as it became increasingly difficult to systematically bridge "the gap between our culture's technological lead and its social dimension."[33] The core problem was thus not excessive planning, but fast-paced and imbalanced changes in society. This development and its undesired repercussions called for planning, but the potential of planning itself was also undermined by the intensity and direction of the ongoing change.

In the past present of the mid-1950s, a fear of unpredictability was a central part of the space of experience as well as its horizon of expectation. In other words, fear figured in two roles: fear as the alarmed *anticipation* of the future was based on an *experienced* fear in the past. These notions also framed the role of planning—not as the morally questionable intervention into and infringement of individual liberties, but an essential tool for controlling the future.

The prerequisites for managing future developments were tied to wider-scale changes in social knowledge production. The 1940s and 1950s

[32] Kuusi, P. (1956). Hallitun yhteiskuntapolitiikan mahdollisuuksista. *Suomalainen Suomi* 24(5), 329–332.

[33] Waris (1954), 17.

saw a surge in systematic and empirical social scientific knowledge and economic data (e.g., in national economic statistics),[34] which were seen to produce new, critical scientific knowledge. The perception was linked to logical empiricism, which emphasized experiential and observational evidence as the foundation for conceptions of reality. The so-called new social sciences were enlivened by a strong positivist ethos that paralleled the social sciences with the natural sciences.[35] To Waris and Kuusi, the new (Anglo-American) social sciences epitomized rational and pragmatic thought. Respectively, Kuusi and Waris perceived and represented actors, academic disciplines, and discourses of the past, as well as contemporaries still abiding by these old ideas, as naïve, irrational, and emotional.

> Modern-day social scientists have a different attitude than the prophets of past centuries, or utopians who in their mind strive to build a future society in accordance with their personal ideals and beliefs, guided only by their internal visions and inspiration.[36]

> Man has learned to use the mind for controlling nature, yet still attempts to govern people and crowds with the heart rather than the brain, with belief rather than knowledge.[37]

On the other hand, Waris pointed out that methodological advances had also brought about rational and mature criticism regarding the limitations of research-based predictions. However, this did not imply that planning should be abandoned; on the contrary, a dynamic and changing society needed the support of dynamic social sciences.[38] Science-based planning presented itself as a tool for reining in political games and preventing contingent social policy and its consequences. The objective was to scientize society and rationalize social policy by anchoring them in scientific knowledge—ultimately, to strip societal policy of its ideological and political features. Kuusi and Waris had, in other words, adopted a social

[34] Paavonen (2006), 53; Saloniemi (1996), 91–92, 97–98.
[35] Tiihonen (1985), 258; Saloniemi (1996); Waris (1954), 17.
[36] Waris (1954), 17.
[37] Kuusi (1956), 330.
[38] Waris (1954), 17–18; Kuusi (1956), 330–331.

engineering approach, albeit without the utopian visions commonly associated with a technocratic ideology.[39]

Confidence in the potential of planning grew stronger during the 1950s, but unlike the Swedish strong society idea, it was not exalted by strong optimism or a belief in progress. The setting for the SPA's discussions on planning and the future consisted of a chaotic space of experience, which colored the horizon of expectation with a fear of undesired, uncontrolled, and sudden developments, looming as imminent threats in the absence of robust and long-term societal planning.

In early 1958, the association responded to Kuusi's plea during the retrenchment debate. It commissioned Kuusi to draft a "master plan for social policy," which was to include "the general knowledge that enables social policy to be systematically developed within the limits set by our national economy."[40]

Present Past: Proactive Planning for a Modern Society (Early 1960s)

For Finland, markedly late to the modernization game, the 1960s entailed a multifaceted transition period. Finnish companies were subjected to international economic competition, but on the other hand, swelling Western currency reserves facilitated the spread of scientific and technological innovations. Consumption opportunities also expanded fast. These changes and their various consequences reinforced one another.[41]

[39] Marklund, C. (2009). Begriffsgeschichte and Übergriffsgeschichte in the history of social engineering. In T. Etzemüller (ed.), *Die Ordnung der Moderne: Social Engineering im 20. Jahrhundert*. Transcript Verlag, 199–221; Pietikäinen, P. (2017). "Neurosis can still be your comforting friend": Neurosis and maladjustment in twentieth-century medical and intellectual history. In C. Johns (ed.), *The Neurotic turn: Inter-disciplinary correspondences on neurosis*. Repeater Books, 17–55, 21–22.

[40] National Archives of Finland (NAF), The Finnish Social Policy Association's Archive (FSPAA), folder H4, Pekka Kuusi's memorandum "Drafting a plan for Finland's social policy," December 9, 1957; National Archives of Finland (NAF), The Finnish Social Policy Association's Archive (FSPAA), folder H4, funding application to the Finnish Cultural Foundation, September 21, 1959.

[41] Kalela, J. (2005). Hyvinvointivaltion rakentaminen. In M. K. Niemi and V. Pernaa (eds.), *Suomalaisen yhteiskunnan poliittinen historia*. Edita, 205–224, 213. See also Kalela, J. (1989). *Työttömyys 1900-luvun suomalaisessa yhteiskuntapolitiikassa*. Työvoimaministeriö, 175–176.

The early 1960s was a fruitful environment for so-called planning optimism. It was characterized by a belief in progress, which applied to economic development, the potential of academic research, and rational decision-making. Science-based planning was seen as a means for defining and achieving societal objectives that modernization, industrialization, and economic growth had brought forth as actual possibilities.

Ideas in the SPA also shifted toward planning optimism. In 1961, it published two books: *Social Policy of the Finnish Society*[42] by Waris, and *Social Policy for the Sixties*[43] by Kuusi, which was also published as an English-language version entitled *Social Policy for the Sixties: A Plan for Finland*[44] in 1964. Kuusi's work became a Finnish bestseller, still hailed today as the Finnish Beveridge Report, the definitive handbook for the Finnish welfare state.

Both Waris and Kuusi present the past in a small but neutral or positive light. Waris' book opens with an introduction in which he mainly describes long-term societal developments, such as industrialization, urbanization, and Finland's general modernization development. Unlike in the mid-1950s, Waris' tone is not one of concern but is rather neutral, at times even positive—Waris thus depicted societal changes as progress. The introduction in Kuusi's book also went over long-term development, but with a more outspokenly positive note. He described the history of the past centuries as "an enormous forward step on the long road of mankind's development," in which the individual had experienced a rise "first from a subject to a citizen, and then from the prime force behind public policy to its criterion."[45] On the more recent past, Kuusi concluded lyrically:

> Now, in the 1960's, we can see that the last few decades have been truly exceptional in the long history of mankind. In no period of history was an era so strikingly different from any earlier one. An astronaut orbiting the globe is not sufficient to symbolize our brave era. The symbol of our time is man rising from his poverty.[46]

[42] Waris, H. (1961). *Suomalaisen yhteiskunnan sosiaalipolitiikka: Johdatus sosiaalipolitiikkaan*. WSOY.

[43] Kuusi (1961).

[44] Kuusi (1964).

[45] Ibid., 34.

[46] Ibid.

Kuusi's space of experience had thus shifted from experiencing an almost default-like state of fear regarding unpredictability to an expanded notion of the past in which international and national crises were mere trivial details in the bigger picture: the entire history of humankind proceeding toward a better present and future. He even expressed disgruntled bafflement at the 1950s criticism of social policy and its expansion[47]—in other words, the same debates in which he himself had participated.

The rise of planning optimism was related to a positive space of experience at the turn of the decade. The past was seen in a new, positive light, which reconnected the past, the present, and the future to a long continuum of progress. From this perspective, the "new era" and its many changes appeared first and foremost as opportunities. Structural change and economic growth manifested as rural–urban migration, increasing urban populations, and new factories. Finland's population and industrial development appeared to follow the path of Sweden, albeit with a two-decade lag.[48] As noted earlier, in the relationship between Finland and Sweden, the latter represented a pioneering epitome of Nordicness and hence also served as Finland's horizon of expectation. Now, it appeared that a welcome modernization development awaited Finland, including free-trade integration and its possibilities for economic growth and development.

In the works of Kuusi and Waris, references to the past were rather scarce, as they both had their gaze fixed, first and foremost, on the optimistic future: a broad horizon of expectation expanded by the positive space of experience.[49]

As the title suggests, the focus of *Social Policy for the Sixties* was set on the future. Kuusi's original task was to outline a plan for systematically developing social policy in relation to the national economy. In early 1959, however, the objective had expanded to "providing an answer to a more general question: what will the status and role of social policy be in a society striving for economic growth[?]"[50] According to Kuusi, Waris had assumed that *Social Policy for the Sixties* would be a "general description of Finnish social policy that can be used as a textbook." When he realized this would not be the case, Waris embarked on writing his *Social Policy of the*

[47] Kuusi (1964), 34–38.

[48] Paavonen (2006), 15–19, 62.

[49] See also Chap. 16 by P. Haapala, in which he discusses Kuusi's work and optimistic and future-oriented social policies, among others.

[50] National Archives of Finland (NAF), The Finnish Social Policy Association's Archive (FSPAA), folder F2, Letter to the Huoltaja Foundation, 16 February 1959.

Finnish Society.[51] However, Kuusi's original task was to derive a comprehensive plan, not a general description. The simultaneous writing and publication of the two books might also have been rooted in the academic rivalry between the authors.

Regardless of behind-the-scenes motivations, the end result was two publications representing similar conceptions on society, social policy, and science. Nevertheless, Waris' book was spectacularly overshadowed by Kuusi's work, both in contemporary debates and in subsequent research literature, not to mention how it was translated into actual policies. Nonetheless, it is particularly surprising that Waris' contribution has been overlooked in literature on the planning discourse in Finland and the history of the SPA. After all, *Social Policy of the Finnish Society* was a book by Waris, Professor of Social Policy and Chair of the SPA, intended to serve "mainly as a textbook in universities and other educational institutions, as well as a guidebook for the numerous organizations whose activities require a comprehensive understanding and current knowledge of Finnish social policy."[52] The modest formulation conceals an ambitious target audience and impact. As a textbook, the publication would have the potential to influence the ideological basis of future scholars, politicians, and civil servants, and, as a guidebook for social welfare and health organizations, it would have practical implications—and neither of these goals went unrealized, as the book was indeed used as a textbook for decades.

Kuusi and Waris conveyed planning optimistic temporal conceptions, which entailed a broad gaze into the past as well as toward the future. In this past present, the space of experience encompassed decades, centuries, and even millennia, with the passage of history appearing as steady progress toward an ever better future. Respectively, the horizon of expectation reached wide and far: The perceived need to confine national futures to narrow and short-term lanes had been replaced by the task of engineering the future of humankind. It presented itself as an exalted and multifaceted opportunity.

In the present past of the early 1960s, conceptions of the relationship between social and economic policy were also colored by planning optimism and its positive temporal notions, in particular its hopeful outlook on the future. Planning optimism envisioned social policy that encompassed all individuals and societal groups. Kuusi spoke of "man-centered

[51] Tuomioja, E. (1996). *Pekka Kuusi: alkoholipoliitikko, sosiaalipoliitikko, ihmiskuntapoliitikko*. Tammi, 147.

[52] Waris (1961), v.

public policy" that "places its trust in man" and "rests on the unconditional acceptance of human dignity." He crystallized the goal of comprehensive social policy into a slogan-like heading: "the good of the citizen—the supreme goal."[53] Waris, for his part, concluded that society had progressed from mitigating class conflicts to furthering "modern social policy," which encompassed all societal groups.[54]

The new conceptions of social policy as a dynamic and comprehensive whole were interlinked with a new, dynamic view on economic policy, which strived for full employment and counter-cyclical measures. Kuusi and Waris called for a reassessment of the economic effects of social policy: It should be seen as measures that increase welfare and balance spending power, which ultimately support economic growth. Kuusi straightforwardly called the old perception of social policy as mere public expenses "a fallacy"[55]—in other words, he criticized the core premise of the ideas he himself had so vocally advocated only a few years previously. In a similar vein, Waris argued:

> Social policy is no longer only seen as 'costs' or 'expenses', since experience has demonstrated the positive impact of more effective [social] security and improved safety on the national economy as a whole.[56]

Kuusi based his views on Swedish economist and politician Gunnar Myrdal's ideas of "circular cumulative causation" in society. Myrdal was skeptical of the neoclassical premise of economic equilibrium and saw instead that economic, political, cultural, and other factors formed mutually reinforcing processes. Well-planned societal policy played a crucial role in ensuring that these interactions were transformed into virtuous rather than vicious circles—that is, into a positive feedback loop between redistributive social policy, economic growth, and expanding democracy.[57]

Neither planning optimism nor the idea of virtuous circles assumed that social policy self-evidently supported economic growth. Both Kuusi and Waris maintained that subjecting social policy to economic

[53] Kuusi (1964), 30–31, 43.
[54] Waris (1961), 29.
[55] Kuusi (1964), 70.
[56] Waris (1961), 305.
[57] Kettunen, P. (2019b). The conceptual history of the welfare state in Finland. In N. Edling (ed.), *The changing meanings of the welfare state: Histories of a key concept in the Nordic countries*. Berghahn Books, 225–275; Kettunen (2019a).

development was imperative. In other words, more social policy did not automatically mean more economic growth. In fact, social policy still had all the possibilities to disrupt the national economy and ongoing structural changes. The core task of planning was, indeed, to ensure that social policy progressed at an appropriately moderate pace—in other words, to prevent vicious circles.

> The expansion of social income transfers as envisaged by us is not intended to impair the preconditions of our economic growth. […] The reason for making a plan is precisely to provide against the occurrence of any adjustment difficulties. […] 'Slowly but surely' shall be our slogan.[58]

Kuusi and Waris depicted economic growth and expanding social policy as inherently linked, in that precise order. Furthermore, both policies were seen as parts of a holistic whole labeled "societal policy" (*yhteiskuntapolitiikka*).[59] A crucial deviation from earlier conceptions was the horizon of expectation. The national economic frame had been transformed from threat and restriction to opportunity. Whereas the horizon of expectation in the late 1950s was characterized by a fear of societal and political chaos, the economic growth of the early 1960s—and the assumption of sustained economic growth[60]—gave the future its signature optimistic flair.

> Social policy has latitude. […] With the ever-broadening outlook of economic growth opening up before us, the Social Policy Association has now embarked on long-term planning.[61]

> For the first time in history people have begun to believe that poverty can truly be expelled. Democracy, social equalization and economic growth seem to be fortunately interrelated in modern society. Social policy seems to spring from free and growth-oriented human nature.[62]

[58] Kuusi (1964), 282, 290.

[59] See also Kettunen (2019b).

[60] Kuusi, P. (1963). Sosiaalipolitiikka ja taloudellinen kasvu. In *Kunnallispolitiikkaa 1960-luvulla*. Suomen kaupunkiliitto, Maalaiskuntien liitto & Finlands svenska landskommuners förbund, 105–118, 107.

[61] Waris (1961), 304.

[62] Kuusi (1964), 34.

On the other hand, economic growth was not perceived merely as an innate and self-evident result of transnational and transhistorical "growth-oriented human nature," but also as a national necessity in a globalizing and changing world. The horizon of expectation incorporated both aspects: It was about the development of all humankind, and Finland, too, had to get on the bandwagon. It did not exist or develop in an isolated vacuum, but in interaction with and in relation to other national entities—indeed, international comparisons play an important role in constructing nations, national identities, and national collectives.[63] Whereas Sweden has typically acted as Finland's horizon of expectation in its own right, the Soviet Union, on the other hand, not only represented a looming threat, but also a future path to avoid. In a "simultaneously fatalistic and optimistic" proclamation (as characterized by Pauli Kettunen[64]), Kuusi specifically crystallized the mission of Finland by relating it to its neighbors—but now, Sweden and the Soviet Union were, in fact, paralleled as representatives of the same future in the all-encompassing growth-oriented trajectory: "To be able to continue our own life between Sweden and the Soviet Union, our two neighbors willing and able to grow, we ourselves are doomed to grow."[65]

After the initial shock, the notion of the dynamic relationship between economic and social policy as well as the idea of comprehensive social policy were soon embraced, which has been explained in part by the need to be able to manage the ongoing changes of 1960s society.[66] However, planning had been seen as a means for controlling change already in the 1950s. Instead, the perception of change had shifted in accordance with the horizon of expectation: In lieu of managing future risks, it was now a matter of proactively engineering future opportunities.

By the early 1960s, the planning conceptions of Waris and Kuusi had developed into an ideology that resembled Scandinavian forms of social engineering, to which I add the strong society ideology.[67] Common denominators included optimistic confidence in societal and scientific

[63] Kettunen, P. (2006). The power of international comparison: A perspective on the making and challenging of the Nordic welfare state. In N. F. Christiansen et al. (eds.), *The Nordic model of welfare: A historical reappraisal.* Museum Tusculanum Press, 31–65, 58–59.

[64] Ibid., 58–59.

[65] Kuusi (1964), 59.

[66] Kalela (2005), 216; Kalela (1989), 177.

[67] See, for example, Slagstad, R. (2004). Shifting knowledge regimes. *Thesis Eleven* 77(1), 65–83; Andersson (2003), 32–34.

progress. Self-reinforcing socioeconomic processes were seen to generate economic growth, increase security, and improve living conditions. Growth-oriented social policy served as an apparatus that expanded productivity throughout society, and hence an investment in sustaining economic growth. The prevailing positivist view of society was also crystallized in the management of historical time: It sought to explain and rationalize the past, manage the present, and predict, plan, and govern the future. The central objective was the scientization, rationalization, and governance of modern society, as well as managing its historical time.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have sought to demonstrate how the *presents past* approach can be used as an analytical lens for studying microhistorical facets of wider-scale phenomena. By exploring ideas and actions as situational events, it also showcases contradictions and contingent aspects that are easily left out later in outlining long-term developments. In short, the approach taps into the inherent "messiness" of human experience, which is, paradoxically, often muddied and obscured by stylized narratives, neat categorizations, and clearly demarcated periodizations.

This approach is useful in analyzing societal experiences and ideological shifts that cannot be traced back to dichotomies like left–right or internal–external. Unlike the Swedish strong society ideology,[68] planning ideas in the SPA were not prompted by external conservative criticism. Rather, the SPA's planning discourses included elements from both conservative and rivaling Swedish views—that is, conservative notions of social and economic policy in the 1950s as well as planning optimism in the early 1960s. Furthermore, scientific progress was not automatically linked to dynamic societal policies. Initially, the planning ideas of Kuusi and Waris were conservatively formulated: In the mid-1950s, they emphasized the importance of scientific knowledge for reining in social policy at risk of running amok. Only in the early 1960s had the shift to planning optimism created striking similarities to the Swedish strong state ideology and progressive social engineering.

A key difference between the planning optimistic present and the presents past of the 1950s was the length and focus of temporal perspectives.

[68] Andersson (2003), 35.

The previous presents pasts were restricted to short perspectives on the past and future: Their spaces of experience focused on the difficult recent past, and their horizons of expectations were respectively focused on the near future and how to contain it. They were also nationally focused: first on postwar reconstruction and regaining national agency after an international conflict, and then on domestic crises. In the early 1960s, the temporal perspectives had expanded both in terms of the past and the future, and the national focus was intertwined with the more sweeping trajectory of humankind.

Different relationships and tensions between the past and the future, as well as different lengths in temporal perspectives, hence explain, firstly, why some of the association's actors shied away from comprehensive and planned societal policy; secondly, why others perceived planning as a viable option; and thirdly, why views on planning and its potential were eventually seen in an optimistic light. While the SPA eventually embraced planning optimism and utopian visions, the presents past and horizons of expectation during the 1950s were tinted with a much more nuanced balance between hope and fear.

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