5. The vertical division of responsibility for social services within and beyond the State: issues in empowerment, participation and territorial cohesion

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INTRODUCTION

It is well known that public responsibility for social policies in Europe has been extensively 're-scaled' in the course of the last decades: from the national state it has shifted upwards (towards the European Union) and downwards (towards the local levels, including municipalities, sometimes even neighbourhoods in big cities, and/or intermediate levels, such as regions, provinces or districts) (see among others Ferrera, 2005; Kazepov, 2010).

The changing articulation of what we call the vertical division of responsibility (Aguilar Hendrickson and Sabatinelli, 2014; see also Martinelli, Chapter 1, in this volume) is a complex process that affects systems that by definition have been constituted, consolidated and expanded as national entities. The literature highlights ambivalences in the re-scaling of social policies. With reference to upward re-scaling, the non-binding character of most guidelines provided by the European Union on social policies (see also Goméz-Barroso et al., in this volume) has hindered harmonisation among member countries. In turn, this has raised issues in terms of social rights boundaries (Ferrera, 2005). On the other hand, the prolonged economic recession has led European and international bodies to be much more effective in imposing austerity measures, entailing direct and indirect cuts to social expenditure, in some countries more than in others (Saraceno, 2013). In what concerns downward re-scaling, on the one hand, the decentralisation of social policies has sometimes allowed for the development of innovative, flexible, place-specific declinations of policies; on the other hand, it has often entailed reduced accountability, public

de-responsibilisation and increased territorial differences (Keating, 1998; Bonoli, 2012; Rodríguez-Pose and Ezcurra, 2010).

Re-scaling processes take different forms in different national contexts. They also assume different meanings when countries of different size are considered, in terms of both population and territory. Even the features of the multi-level governance (MLG) system and the initial degree of centralisation are relevant. Therefore, the above-described risks do not have the same impact in all contexts. In fact, they are more evident – and stronger – in Southern European countries, where the allocation of responsibilities among different institutional levels has remained fuzzy and has allowed for both potential loopholes and the overlapping of roles and competences. Moreover, there is a concrete risk of the existing territorial differentiation typical of these countries (Pavolini, 2015) becoming even more evident in the presence of decentralising pressures. Nonetheless, it has been reported that local differentiation occurs and can threaten the principle of equality also in countries where such threat is considered marginal, or is maybe underestimated (Trydegård and Thorslund, 2001).

Concerns about the ambivalent implications of shifts in the vertical division of responsibility vary also in relation to social policy domains. Implications differ depending on whether these changes concern policies involving cash transfers as opposed to the provision of in-kind services, such as social assistance, activation policies, early child education and care, long-term care and housing. In fact, while regulation, financing and planning of social policy can take place at national or regional levels, the organisation and implementation of services are necessarily carried out at the very local level. Therefore, the provision of services may display the most diversified MLG arrangements, since services that obtain legitimation in their respective policy fields usually become the object of national legislation and financing. On the other hand, services that lack institutionalisation are (almost) entirely left to local responsibilities. Furthermore, re-scaling trends can follow specific paths and directions in each policy domain, giving origin to different MLG patterns within the same country.

Against this backdrop, the chapter deals with the ambivalent implications that varying patterns of change in the vertical division of responsibility have on the delivery of social services. In particular, we explore the room for manoeuvre available to local bodies for pursuing quality, efficiency and innovation; the forms of local governance; citizens' participation and empowerment. These are all aspects that ultimately affect the possible impacts on territorial and social cohesion and equal opportunities for accessing welfare resources in each country.

The analysis is based on nine case studies produced within the COST

Action IS1102 *SO.S. COHESION – Social services, welfare states and places*, situated in six European countries. These cases have no ambition to be representative of the complex re-scaling trends that are occurring in Europe and across policy fields. Rather, they should be considered as illustrations of the diverse patterns, risks and potentials that can be found in the evolving scenario of social services throughout Europe. The chosen case studies refer to three policy fields – early childhood education and care, long-term care, and the social inclusion of migrants and Roma – which, in our view, best enable the issues at stake to be observed and discussed. The focus is mainly on Southern and Central-Eastern European countries, in which the issues explored are more evident, with the addition of the UK.

The chapter is organised as follows: the next section briefly recalls the theoretical discussions on re-scaling processes and synthetically frames the trajectories observed in European welfare systems, particularly in the countries of the selected case studies; the subsequent section elaborates on the possible repercussions of changes in the vertical division of responsibility, taking into consideration the case studies; in the last section some conclusions are drawn highlighting a number of critical policy issues.

1.   THE VERTICAL DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN THE STATE AND THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE LOCAL LEVEL: THE DEBATE AND OUR ANALYTICAL TOOLKIT

This section provides a brief and, of necessity, non-exhaustive overview of the debate that has developed around the vertical division of responsibility within the state, with reference to social policy and especially social services. It provides an analysis of the main analytical concepts and variables with the aim of critically addressing the cases that will be discussed in the following section. The analytical framework draws on different streams of literature: studies on welfare models and on government styles, as well as analyses of re-scaling processes, MLG patterns and local welfare systems. Discussions on the implications of these (changing) configurations are then mobilised, paying particular attention to two aspects: (a) users' empowerment and participation; (b) the complex relation between re-scaling processes and territorial cohesion, also with reference to issues of institutional accountability.

Localised Social Policies: Discourses, Strategies and Risks

Re-scaling processes in welfare states are not a recent phenomenon. Indeed, the initial development of welfare states was a long-term re-scaling process. Specifically, it was a process of upward re-scaling from local charity-based assistance initiatives towards an increasing assumption of responsibilities and competences by the nation state in the field of social protection (Kazepov, 2010). For a few decades, the nation state represented the 'natural' space of welfare policies. Social policies, especially those at the core of the welfare systems (old-age pensions, unemployment benefits, education, health in many countries) were largely defined at the national level. The aim was to grant throughout the national territory an even distribution of access points to welfare benefits (that is local offices of national ministries) and services (schools, hospitals, nursing homes, day-care centres). This was consistent with the goal of pursuing universalism as a principle of entitlement to welfare and redistribution of resources.

With the crisis of Fordism in the mid-1970s, and the decline of Keynesian policies and 'spatial Keynesianism' (Brenner, 2004) after almost a century during which the nation state had played a predominant role, growing pressures emerged towards the decentralisation and/or devolution of responsibilities in social policies. A wave of 'implicit' downward re-scaling was observed – that is in the absence of formal regulative reforms – when local bodies acquired greater importance in the management of social protection, due to the interaction between changing economic patterns and the features of existing measures (Kazepov, 2008). For instance, with the increase of long-term unemployment, applications for social assistance schemes similarly increased and were mainly managed by local bodies, often municipalities. Later on – with different timing and speeds – most European countries started experiencing an 'explicit' wave of downward re-scaling, with reforms shifting responsibilities down to local bodies for the delivery, organisation, and increasingly also the financing and regulation of social policies and services (Kazepov, 2008). On the one hand, the claim for devolution originated from below, as local bodies sought more autonomy in managing the greater burden they were confronted with or greater 'institution building' opportunities. This was especially true in some contexts, in connection with the development of localist political parties. On the other hand, the nation state itself implemented decentralisation reforms as a response to its loss of legitimacy due to the fiscal crisis and a perceived lack of efficacy of the traditional, nation-based welfare programmes in the face of 'new social risks' brought about by post-Fordism (Bagnasco and Le Galès, 2000; O'Connor, 1971; Ranci et al., 2014; Taylor-Gooby, 2004).

The core answers to social needs in the Fordist decades were rep-resented by monetary transfers (with the exception of education and health services); the new social risks (especially those related to care and employability) called for more in-kind services. But while cash transfer programmes can be designed and managed centrally by the nation state, services actually consist of personal interactions that cannot but take place (literally and physically) at the local level (Ranci et al., 2014), although they might be – and often are – regulated and/or financed nationally. Despite the fact that the implementation of services has traditionally been a local competence, since local bodies have been in many contexts the first movers in introducing social services, the increasing relevance of local govern-ments is associated with the growth in size, expenditure and social and political importance of demands for and provisions of personal services.

The complex character of re-scaling processes stands in the articulation of responsibilities among government levels with reference to the key func-tions involved in delivering social services: regulation, funding, planning and production (see Martinelli, Chapter 1, in this volume). When examin-ing the implications of re-scaling, impacts strongly depend on which insti-tutional level does what.

The Main Implications of Re-scaling

As discourses portraying the national welfare state as outdated, inefficient and 'passive'[1] gained momentum, it was increasingly 'considered to be more effective, more participative and democratic and more sustainable' to 'localise' social policies, bringing decision-making closer to the local level (Andreotti et al., 2012, p. 1926). This rhetoric tended to develop independently from empirical evidence, even more so in systems that used to be strongly centralised and/or where monetary transfers played a com-paratively dominant role vis-à-vis service provision, like Mediterranean countries. In this context, the three main dimensions to analyse are effec-tiveness, participation and sustainability.

As regards the first dimension, localised social policies are widely con-sidered to be more effective. In fact, it is believed that, at the local level, it is possible to define solutions better consistent with the specific local fea-tures (labour market, housing market, family structures, migration flows). It is also deemed that these solutions allow to better build on the specific resources of the local context (such as the traits of the local economy, the variety and density of local actors, or the morphology of the area). If local welfare systems are understood as 'specific configurations of population needs and welfare providers and resources [. . .] deeply embedded in the specific feature of each local context' (Andreotti et al., 2012, p. 1927), it

is then from this interplay – between specific demands and assets of the locality – that local welfare systems should draw.

As regards the second dimension, localised policies are believed to offer more scope for participation and innovation, on the basis of the argument that the 'localisation of policies will facilitate the activation and empowerment of citizens and [. . .] of non-governmental actors in decision making, therefore opening the arena to civil society organisations and strengthening democracy' (Andreotti et al., 2012,p. 1927). The re-scaling of welfare competences has been accompanied by a parallel gradual delegation of responsibilities to non-public actors, in the frame of a strong rhetoric on 'subsidiarity'. Non-public actors were the first initiators of service provision in many countries and were subsequently overshadowed by the predominant role of the central state during the golden age of the welfare state. Especially starting in the 1990s, the role of for profit and non-profit actors in the service sector increased. This was particularly the case of out-sourced public services, as needs for personal services increased in quantity and diversity, although with a different timing across European countries. These actors' more flexible organisation – as opposed to big, hierarchical, public institutions – appeared to be better suited to grasp the changing nature of social needs and to experiment with innovative policy answers. At the same time, the local level was deemed the elective scale at which bottom-up and grassroots initiatives could develop to innovate contents, approaches and/or processes of social intervention.

As regards the third dimension – financial sustainability – the debate on federalism and/or decentralisation revolved for a long time around the supposed enhanced capacity of local governments to contain public spending. This was based on the argument that it is easier for citizens and voters to control expenditures since they are carried out at the scale of the locality where they live, and to verify how resources are used in practice. However, as stressed by Bonoli (2012), the most effective mechanism of spending control has often been sheer 'blame avoidance'. In many cases the transfer of responsibilities from the central state to sub-national institutional levels has masked attempts to elude commitments towards social demands that could not be addressed in the conditions of 'permanent austerity' which characterised post-Fordist Western societies (Pierson, 2001). This was especially the case when the transfer of responsibilities was not accompanied by the transfer of adequate resources – a mechanism labelled 'decentralisation of penury' (Meny and Wright, 1985, cited in Keating, 1998) – leaving local bodies either to raise more resources autonomously (often involving higher local taxes, if they had such power) and/or to manage citizens' discontent.[2]

In addition to the above, a key aspect that must be considered when

discussing the implications of re-scaling processes – particularly down-ward ones – is the impact on territorial cohesion, that is, whether and under which conditions greater local responsibility affects the distribu-tion of welfare resources and the access to welfare benefits. Local vari-ations might concern the quantity of services and how widespread they are throughout the territory. However, they also concern their quality, the specific content nuances that similar services might take in differ-ent localities, or the degree of innovation in the programmes developed. The nation state is the only institutional level capable of guaranteeing rights, including social rights (Saraceno, 2005, p. 5). In contexts where the nation state's capacity to frame and control local differences is lower and where subjective entitlements are weaker and non-enforceable, the risk for citizenship rights to vary according to the place where people (happen to) live is higher (Kazepov, 2010). In the attempt to control such drifts, changes have been introduced in several countries. Said changes include soft governance tools, such as steering mechanisms, unification and reduc-tion in the number of municipalities (for example in Finland), abolition, reduction of competences or transformation of intermediate levels into merely administrative bodies without elected councils (for example the reform of provinces in Italy), and/or re-centralising reforms. Similar to the case for decentralisation pressures, re-centralisation trends have also been observed, guided by the same concerns for curbing public expenditure, especially after the recent global recession.

Whether the re-scaling process occurs upward or downward, or even in both directions at the same time, an added concern is that it can lead to a less transparent system of responsibilities, with an overall reduction of accountability. This happens when the MLG system stemming from the implementation of re-scaling reforms does not define a clear verti-cal division of responsibility among institutional levels, especially in the attribution of competences and responsibilities with regard to regulation, funding, planning and production. A similar concern also regards horizon-tal subsidiarity among different public and non-public actors partaking in the provision of services. In an opaque system, blame-avoidance becomes easier, while it is more difficult for citizens to claim their rights.

Diverse Trajectories

The complex re-scaling processes briefly described above have involved most European Union member states, starting in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Yet, at a closer look, differences and specificities emerge in the paths followed by each country. This is partly dependent on the specific government style – 'Scandinavian', 'Napoleonic' or 'Anglo-Saxon'

(Bennett, 1993) – and on the inter-scalar configuration of power during the origin and consolidation phases of the welfare state. But it also depends on the morphology and population size of each country, as well as on the dimension that similar administrative bodies have in different contexts (for example small vs. large municipalities). These institutional features are then intertwined with the specific characteristics of the national welfare models (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Ferrera, 1996) and the broad paths and timing of the reforms that followed in the shift to post-Fordism (Esping-Andersen et al., 2002; Bonoli and Natali, 2012; see also Martinelli, Chapter 1, in this volume).

The MLG features of the countries generally included in the Nordic welfare model have been defined as a 'centrally framed local autonomy' (Kazepov, 2010, pp. 53–6). In this context, a long-lasting tradition of local autonomy – built also on a 'Scandinavian' system of local government (Bennett, 1993) – has allowed social citizenship rights to be warranted throughout the country, also owing to the recognition of several social entitlements, such as subjective rights, the definition of minimum standards of provision, and the use of soft governance tools.

In England – traditionally a 'centrally framed' context (Kazepov, 2010) – decentralisation trends have been more recent. Moreover, they are interacting in complex ways with the re-centralisation implications of austerity measures and the centrally-imposed limits on public expenditure of recent years (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2012).

Both continental German-speaking and Southern European countries share a 'regionally framed' MLG system in the domain of social policies (Kazepov, 2010) and a 'Napoleonic' style of local government (Bennett, 1993). Nevertheless, the national contexts of the local cases analysed here are profoundly different. In fact, Germany and Austria display forms of 'institutional isomorphism' (Di Maggio and Powell, 1983) that attempt to keep somehow under control territorial differences which – within a federalist organisation of the State – can be significant, especially in some policy fields.[3] By contrast, in Italy (similarly to what happens in other Southern European countries), a less inclusive social protection system (with the lack of subjective rights even in terms of minimum income support) goes hand in hand with the lack of centrally engineered steering mechanisms. Minimum standards – to be respected throughout the country – have been defined for health services, but not for social services. Besides, institutional bodies that should enhance coordination among institutional levels are largely ineffective. In such a context, the regionalisation of social policies – ratified in the Constitutional reform of 2001 – has increased the pre-existing very severe territorial divides, especially between North and South, but also within regions, in a sort of 'anarchic municipalism' (Saraceno, 2005).

Finally, 'transition' countries are much more dissimilar than gener-ally assumed. During the Soviet period the prevalence of a monolithic nation state structure was a common denominator implemented in quite diverse pre-existent institutional systems. In Hungary, an intermediate institutional level (the counties) used to play a relevant role before the establishment of the Soviet system. The 1989–90 transition provided more autonomy for the local level, namely municipalities, whose number was doubled to promote local democracy (Fleischer et al., 2002).

2. SOME IMPLICATIONS OF RE-SCALING: ILLUSTRATIONS FROM CASE STUDIES

This section builds on case studies presented in the course of the COST Action IS1102 *SO.S. COHESION*. In particular, it draws on nine cases which, among other aspects, dealt with the vertical division of responsi-bility within the state. The said cases are not necessarily representative of general national trends, but they shed light on re-scaling dynamics across various European countries and, at the same time, across different policy fields, including services for older people, childcare and the social inclu-sion of migrants and Roma. They all fall within the context of the general trends and national institutional frameworks described in the previous section. However, the cases examined are rather heterogeneous in terms of territorial scale: some address specific local initiatives, others the municipal or regional governance system, others yet national trajectories. Some of these cases stem from bottom-up initiatives. As such, although they are not the result of decentralisation processes, they still show an increase in the relevance of the local institutional level. In fact, they are at the forefront of pressing social problems, against the absence or inadequacy of interven-tion from other scales. Table 5.1 illustrates the case studies considered in this chapter, summarising some of their basic features.

As stressed earlier, the aim of this section is not to generalise or provide an exhaustive assessment of the trends at play. The cases examined here are used to exemplify different patterns of re-scaling and related implications. The review is focused on two such implications, in line with the literature: (a) changes in citizens' empowerment and participation; (b) impacts on social and territorial cohesion. Some attention is also paid to whether re-scaling has affected the degree of transparency of the overall govern-ance system and its level of accountability. Overall, our analysis aims to highlight the ambivalent character of changes in the vertical division of responsibility.

Table 5.1   The COST case studies examined

Place	Country	Users of social services	Authors
Leeds	UK	Older people	Yeandle, 2014
Germany	DE	Older people	Bode, 2013
Six Danish Municipalities	DK	Older people	Jensen and Fersch, 2013
Reggio Calabria	IT	Older people	Martinelli, 2012 Bagnato et al., 2014
Vienna	AT	Roma	Novy et al., 2015 (see also Weinzierl et al., in this volume)
Hungary	HU	Roma	Novy et al., 2015 (see also Weinzierl et al., in this volume)
Badolato and Riace	IT	Immigrants	Sarlo and Martinelli, 2016
Austria	AT	Early childhood	Leibetseder, 2016
Reggio Calabria	IT	Early childhood	Martinelli et al., 2012 Martinelli and Sarlo, 2014 Martinelli et al., 2014

Source: Authors' own compilation.

Empowerment and Participation

A number of our cases studies exhibit interesting features of the relationships that can develop between varying configurations of the vertical division of responsibility and bottom-up participatory initiatives (see also García et al., 2008; Moulaert et al., 2014; Brandsen et al., 2016). As argued above, a possible outcome of decentralisation can be improved forms of citizens' participation and/or empowerment, in line with Andreotti et al. (2012). Examples of such virtuous participatory practices are provided by the Austrian and Hungarian cases (CAP Novy et al., 2015; Weinzierl et al., in this volume).

In Austria, the Thara project addressed the participation of Roma in the labour market, an issue largely overlooked by national employment policies. Efforts were made to build an open and representative working consortium at the local level. Closer contacts with the communities were vital in raising awareness and in stimulating active engagement. The existing scepticism to collaborate with public institutions (and vice versa) was partly overcome, although social inclusion strategies normally involve long-term processes, particularly when facing a long history of exclusion, as in the case of Roma. The project also contributed to the empowerment

of both individuals and the wider community: Romani women employed by Thara brought new competence to the wider field of employment services, which used to be characterised by homogeneous social profiles. They also filled a gap in Roma (political) representation (CAP Novy et al., 2015; Weinzierl et al., in this volume).

In Hungary, the movement for the Tanoda study halls provides another illustration of empowerment. Owing to the opening of study halls, Roma children could enjoy access to quality training and services they were unlikely to receive in the public school system. The movement implemented a positive discrimination strategy broadening the approach of the Hungarian educational system. Yet, despite the positive impact of the project, some potentially negative implications in terms of accessibility must be highlighted. First of all, although study halls are open to all students, they are specifically targeted to Roma. Therefore, they tend to exclude non-Roma students. Secondly, study halls are located in cities, where innovative capital and support are more easily available. It is thus legitimate to wonder whether the initiative would be capable of reaching more deprived territories. Thirdly, the project – as in the case of Thara – thrives on continuing (largely European) funding, which raises questions of sustainability over time (CAP Novy et al., 2015; Weinzierl et al., in this volume).

Despite their critical aspects, the above cases clearly show how civil society organisations can contribute to stimulate service quality and innovation through localised initiatives. This is evident also in the case of the 'Dorsal of hospitality' in Southern Italy (CAP Sarlo and Martinelli, 2016). The Dorsal includes a series of innovative projects for the reception of asylum seekers, in some municipalities of the Locri Plain in Calabria, a context long characterised by economic marginality and weak social capital. In the vacuum left by an inactive public sector, several local actors from the municipal administrations and the civil society developed a 'solidarity network'. Public funding was then put together to further support the project. In the most recent years, however, it has been hard for local actors to strike a balance between innovation and institutionalisation of the initiative. A first issue concerns financial sustainability. Although a regional law has institutionalised the Dorsal's approach, limited financial provisions were allocated for its implementation. Furthermore, although the municipalities have recently joined the SPRAR reception system,[4] the latter is not providing funding as it primarily targets large cities with higher reception capacity. A second issue concerns bureaucratic constraints to creativity and innovation. Being part of the SPRAR involves the fulfilment of bureaucratic requirements which often hinder experimentation and frustrate creative drives.

The case of Leeds in the UK well exemplifies the mixed implications of participatory processes with reference to the reorganisation of services for older people (CAP Yeandle, 2014). Alongside horizontal and vertical subsidiarisation processes, the City Council has developed bottom-up consultation mechanisms to ensure that citizens engage in service planning and feed into decisions about the shape of services. This has increased their awareness of needs and policy issues and has possibly helped to define more consistent welfare configurations. At first glance, thus, this case could be read in a positive light for its constructive implications in terms of participation and empowerment, but the picture is more complex. In its attempt to deal with inequalities and to achieve cost-efficiency objectives, the Council has supported the development of local partnerships by drawing on initiatives that mobilise local communities and volunteers to help the older population. This has led to service diversification and to the emergence of new forms of solidarity towards older people (and their caregivers). On the other hand, as a result of this reorganisation, part of the older community no longer has access to services, as publicly funded support is now limited to the poorest. The care system for older people has thus been substantially disrupted and citizens' participation has been somehow 'brought in' to respond to, and legitimise, this move.

Social and Territorial Cohesion

In some European countries, strong territorial inequalities exist in the distribution of welfare resources. Re-scaling processes can further amplify this problem. Municipalities can gain considerable room for manoeuvre in social services programming and implementation and this can fuel innovative interventions to fill the gaps associated with underdeveloped or ineffective policies defined by other higher-level institutional actors. At the same time, however, with an increasing territorial diversification of welfare services, inequalities can emerge or grow stronger, thus impacting on social cohesion.

Childcare in Austria provides an example of how government efforts aimed at reducing territorial disparities in welfare service provision can be fraught with the threat of inequality (CAP Leibetseder, 2016). Up to 2008, only provinces and local communities had the responsibility to provide and pay for childcare services, whose coverage was comparatively low, with strong territorial differences. The Austrian Federal Government now provides financial support to provincial authorities and requires them to grant minimum access to care and the fulfilment of qualitative benchmarks. This was aimed at harmonising the provision and quality of services. An agreement between the Federal Government and the Provinces defines the

minimum provision. Provinces are free to decide on the remaining aspects of the arrangements, while municipalities define the amount of fees and lunch provision (according to the standards set by the provincial legislation) and deliver the service. However, in some provinces care services are also provided by private firms and non-profit organisations. Following the reform, a minimum provision (for younger children) is also available in rural areas, but territorial differences still exist as regards distribution, and considerable discretion is left to provinces and municipalities for implementation. The evident risk is a limited capacity of welfare policies to ensure equal access in all territories.

Re-scaling processes have taken place also in Denmark, where territorial variations emerge rather strongly in the care for older people (CAP Jensen and Fersch, 2013). Through the Social Services Act, municipalities have been appointed with the main responsibility of care, and in particular with the task to run residential and nursing homes and provide home care (Jensen and Fersch, 2016). Since 1999, local authorities have been required to define quality standards for the care of older people and to plan and implement control mechanisms to ensure their fulfilment. However, they suffer from increasingly limited financial resources. Their budget is negotiated every year on the basis of an agreement between the Ministry of Finance and the Local Government Denmark (the institution representing Danish municipalities). Moreover, they end up competing among each other to attract citizens and related taxes, and they are pressured to cut back on care provisions. Both issues have translated into significant territorial disparities in the distribution of services. Combined with a wide availability of information on quality standards, this seems to have triggered a phenomenon of change of residency in order to enjoy access to what citizens perceive as better services (Jensen and Lolle, 2013).

Some observations on the uneven territorial distribution of services can be made also for long-term care in Germany (CAP Bode, 2013). Here, care provision presents variations in what concerns public funding available for suppliers, support given to traditional non-profit providers and the role of the for-profit sector. Some (richer) municipalities run more generous programmes, while others are less prodigal even in the delivery of basic 'care support' set out by national law. However, differences remain limited, considering that Länder do not invest consistently in the sector. In the 1980s and 1990s care work in the family was institutionally recognised in Germany and, within the framework of long-term care insurance, the option of 'cash-for-care' was introduced. This gave beneficiaries the possibility to choose among in-kind services (offered by non-profit and/or for-profit providers), cash-for-care payments or a combination of both. Yet access to care and the possibility to choose among services are far from

universal, as the in-kind provision does not cover all needs and the long-term care schemes offer only 'partial insurance coverage', the rest having to be covered by families. As a result, access to care has grown unequal across regions and social classes. The poorest care-dependent citizens are now less likely to be granted access to adequate assistance, particularly in the poorest regions – as the subsidies available to municipalities are capped. While territorial differences in provision – although (to date) minor – are emerging across Germany, they are less a consequence of the vertical division of responsibility and more a result of changes in the horizontal welfare mix (CAP Bode, 2013; see also chapter by Leibetseder et al., in this volume), with the opening of provision to the market. This testifies how rising inequalities in accessing service provision can be a combination of both processes.

Variation in access can also be associated with ineffective MLG patterns that hinder policy implementation. This can take place when a national regulation is weak and grants significant freedom to the lower levels of authority, as in the case of Italy (Costa, 2009). In fact, following the 2001 devolution reform, regional governments have been in charge of social services, which has highlighted differences across regions depending on administrative traditions (CAP Martinelli et al., 2012). The case of the Region of Calabria is emblematic, both as regards childcare and the care of older people (CAP Martinelli and Sarlo, 2014; CAP Martinelli et al., 2014; CAP Bagnato et al., 2014). In contrast with other regions, the Regional Government of Calabria has not yet implemented the 'integrated system of social services' postulated by the National Law 328/2000 and the subsequent Regional Law 23/2003. Moreover, in spite of a significant growth in the demand for services, both childcare services and the care of older people remain inadequate and residual, at a level among the lowest in Italy. Such a deficit is explained by two factors: on the one hand, the regional model of governance and programming has discouraged local authorities from developing a public service provision; on the other, the public provision of such services has been given low political priority, endorsing social norms considering the family as the key care provider. As regards the former, even when some dedicated national resources were available, the regional authority did not manage to assess needs, define priorities and set up a consistent allocation of resources. The limited resources available have been centralised at the regional level despite the formal mandate to municipalities. Moreover, they have been spent on the basis of ad hoc and erratic regional decrees, through a series of public calls with changing beneficiaries and criteria – managed directly by the regional government itself – in a rather hierarchical, opaque and discretionary fashion. This resource allocation system has contributed to determine a scenario of

uncertainty in relation to the transfer of funding to local administrations and a general disempowerment of local actors. Furthermore, municipalities have been 'forced' to compete among each other for regional resources, regardless of their actual service endowment and needs, and despite being often understaffed and lacking specific fundraising competences. The result has been a highly differentiated provision of services within the territory of Calabria itself, depending on each local authority's ability to obtain resources. In the case of childcare, an unregulated private supply has been attempting to meet the growing demand, with problems of accountability and quality, which only recently has been regularised. In the case of care of older people, since the municipal provision of in-kind services is residual, the national cash-for-care system has remained the main public funding source, supporting either family care or privately hired caregivers. The implications are evident: in Calabria, access to services is only for individuals and households that can afford to pay for services in the private market.

Finally, it is important to highlight that re-scaling processes can feature a situation in which the transfer of responsibilities is not coupled by a transfer of resources for implementation. Local authorities can thus be stranded, with no other choice but to raise resources autonomously, through higher local taxes, increased user fees or reduction in provision. The steady decrease in regional care service provision and severe hurdles in the municipal management of services in weak regions like Calabria illustrate the implications of national funds that, on top of being insufficient to start with, have also undergone frequent cuts (CAP Bagnato et al., 2014). The same seems to be occurring following the introduction of austerity measures in the UK, where the central government has reduced transfers and local authorities had to cut back on care provision to older people. In Leeds, this has resulted in reduced access to services, since publicly-funded support remains now available only to the poorest (CAP Yeandle, 2014).

3. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the current restructuring processes, changes in the vertical division of responsibility for social services within the state are a very relevant issue, which can have substantial impacts in terms of empowerment and participation, as well as social and territorial cohesion. Drawing from the case studies presented in this chapter, the following critical issues must be pointed out.

First, re-scaling reforms have not always brought about a clear and balanced attribution of competences and responsibilities among the various institutional levels in the four main functions involved in social service

delivery – regulation, financing, planning and provision. Moreover, their re-allocation has not always involved an adequate parallel attribution of resources. As a consequence, lower-scale institutions might have been given greater space for discretionary action, but often with limited accountability and resources. In such opaque governance systems, blame-avoidance becomes easier, while it is more difficult for citizens to claim their rights.

Secondly, although empowerment – particularly that of the most vulnerable social groups – can be a positive stake and/or outcome of downward re-scaling processes, all efforts and initiatives towards empowerment and democratic participation must be balanced against the severe financial cuts that continue to affect the funding of social services and put the needs of the most vulnerable segments of the population increasingly at risk of remaining unaddressed.

Thirdly, re-scaling can create the conditions for developing localised innovative initiatives, focusing on unaddressed needs or targets, or developing more effective and/or efficient solutions. Yet the very localised character of policy innovations entails some critical aspects:

- In contexts where the vertical division of responsibility lacks a clear attribution of responsibilities, local bodies cannot really pursue innovative and localised interventions as they need to try and compensate for inadequate policies developed by other institutional levels (Aguilar Hendrickson and Sabatinelli, 2014).
- In the absence of the definition of enforceable social rights and/or of minimum standards of intervention, local policy innovation may further increase inequalities among citizens, depending on where they live, in a sort of 'territorial Matthew Effect'. This means that better-off areas can rely on innovative capacities, creative coalitions of actors and abilities to attract funds to finance experimentation more than deprived areas, which are those that would most benefit from innovative projects (Sabatinelli, 2015).
- Paradoxically, innovative drives can be hard to sustain when projects are up-scaled, mainstreamed and institutionalised into (more) permanent structures, which often introduce rigid management and accountability requirements.
- Local authorities can become trapped in a system in which they must compete among each other for resources distributed by higher levels. This causes a detrimental effect on local bodies that are often understaffed and lack specific competences to bid for co-funding.

Last but not least, most of the above issues contribute to increasing the risk of territorial differences in provision, access, quality and cost of

social services, which is a threat to social and territorial cohesion. 'Local citizenships' can entail a positive meaning, being 'situated interactions between citizens sharing a territory and defining together public goods' (Saraceno, 2005, p. 5, our translation). Yet, at least four elements appear fundamental for pursuing a balance between local responsibility and the safeguard of universalism: (1) a well-defined distribution and balancing of responsibilities among all institutional levels, with a view towards greater accountability; (2) the definition of minimum enforceable rights, standards of service contents and costs; (3) territorial (re)distribution mechanisms; and (4) legitimate and effective structures for the mediation of possible institutional conflicts. In the absence of these elements, 'local citizenships' can also turn into 'local non-citizenships' (Saraceno, 2005, p. 5, our translation).

NOTES

1. As opposed to what gradually came to be considered the 'new', 'empowering' types of intervention at the basis of the 'Enabling State' (Serrano-Pascual, 2007, p. 12).
2. It should not be forgotten that the objective to try and reduce public expenditures was also a powerful driver for horizontal subsidiarity (see Anttonen et al., in this volume).
3. In Germany, in particular, territorial differentiation has notably increased after the re-unification of Western and Eastern Länder in 1990 (Oliver and Mätzke, 2014; Ziblatt, 2002).
4. SPRAR stands for *Sistema Centrale di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati* (Central System for the Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees), a national network involving public actors and third sector organisations that manage integrated reception projects with the financial support of the National Fund for Asylum Policies.

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