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**Not the Party of the Welfare State:
The Boundaries of the Concept of the Welfare State
in the Construction of Political Identities
across the British Press**

ABSTRACT

Positioned within the discourse-historical approach (DHA) to discourse analysis, this paper examines the function of discursive constructions of the welfare state as a concept in asserting political identities in a corpus of British newspaper articles. It finds the boundaries of the concept are an important factor in the construction of such identities and proposes that delineation of concept boundaries be considered among the discursive strategies analysed in DHA.

Keywords: welfare state; concept boundaries; discourse-historical approach; British press

1. Context, research material, and timeframe

The British welfare state is problematic in several ways. Traditionally associated with the Labour party, instrumental in establishing its institutions after World War II, the welfare state was accepted as part of the politics of consensus of the two main parties in the post-war decades (see Coxall, Robins, and Leach 2003), with both main parties

becoming largely critical of it in recent years (see Bryson and Fisher 2011).

The term ‘welfare state’ does not appear in what is popularly considered its founding document, the Beveridge Report, whose author reportedly “disliked its ‘Santa Claus’ and ‘brave new world’ connotation” (Timmins 2001:7). As an element of the political system, it is notoriously difficult to define, with no agreement as to what precisely it comprises and the different status of its constituents, ranging from institutions to policies (see Timmins 2001). Appropriately, Garland’s brief overview of the welfare state opens with an attempt to outline its (partly overlapping) ‘conceptions’, from the system of social security, through the insurance-funded system of public and social services, in particular the health service and education, to the broadly defined economic management by the government (Garland 2015). These variants, or delineations, have varying levels of presence in non-specialist discourses, and can be shown to affect the evaluation of the concept and the argumentation strategies that achieve it.

This paper therefore seeks to examine the inclusion or exclusion of certain components from the welfare state, in other words the boundaries of the concept¹, in a sample of British press discourse where the welfare state is relevant for constructing political identities. To do so, it draws on analytical categories offered by the discourse-historical approach (DHA) to discourse analysis, proposing the category of delineation.

The texts analysed in this paper come from a larger corpus of newspaper articles from four British dailies: two from the conservative side of the political spectrum (*The Daily Telegraph* and *The Daily Mail*) and two described as left-leaning (*The Guardian* and *The Daily Mirror*). The corpus was obtained from the LexisNexis database and contains texts with two occurrences of the term ‘welfare state’, as texts with a single mention of the search term were

¹ For an earlier attempt to tackle a similar problem see Paprota (2013), which uses a different corpus and methodological approach.

frequently found not topical. The choice of newspaper discourse is motivated by its dialectical relation to the public opinion and by the fact that it affords access to and recontextualises discourse produced by politicians: both opinion and news texts are what Koller (2004:24) terms, after Foucault, ‘secondary discourse’, which reflects and mediates the primary discourse of what is being reported or commented on.

The timeframe of the corpus (2008-April 2015) is that of the financial crisis and austerity policies in the UK, factors which affected debates on public spending in general and on the welfare state, its axiology, cost and social impact in particular. With the increasing life expectancy, the cost of welfare spending in the UK – the largest component of which is pensions (see Taylor-Gooby 2016) – has been rising. The political will to increase the spending, however, has not: the nationalisation of failing financial institution, starting from Northern Rock in February 2008, resulted in a substantial deficit. The austerity policies of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government formed after the 2010 general election, were implemented with a view to reduce the deficit quickly, but were also consistent with the classical liberal vision of the small state. The reforms relevant to the welfare state, many of which were a continuation of those of (New) Labour, included the introduction of means testing for child benefit; a ‘welfare cap’, or a limit on the amount a household could receive in benefits; changes to housing benefit and to support for persons with disabilities; and a limit to overall welfare spending. These resulted in a more conditional provision of benefits and a more punitive system of sanctions, with both a moral and a financial argument made for the reforms (see Daguerre and Etherington 2014). Labour opposed many but not all austerity measures, sometimes for strategic reasons: for instance, only a handful of Labour MPs voted against the yearly limit to welfare spending in 2014, and the debate on Labour’s political identity is noted throughout the timeframe. The opinions expressed in the press, both on the left and on the right-wing side of the political spectrum, have typically been more diverse and

often more radical than those in parliament, and provide interesting material for analysis.

2. Theoretical background and analytical categories: DHA

DHA, the approach within which this paper is positioned, is one of several most recognisable directions in Critical Discourse Studies, a discipline which examines phenomena at the intersection of language, thought, and society, and analyses language as a social practice (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). Several points distinguish DHA from other approaches in the field. One is its understanding of discourse as “a cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action” (Reisigl and Wodak 2016:27), where discourses exist in a dialectical relation with the social, are polyphonic, and “linked to argumentation about validity claims” (Reisigl and Wodak 2016:27). Another key point is the specific inclusion of historical context as one of the four levels of context to consider, apart from the co-text; the intertextual/interdiscursive relations; and the “context of situation” that sheds light on social variables (Wodak 2001:67).

DHA (and indeed other CDS approaches) is not restricted to textual analysis: when feasible, it suggests adopting a broad view of the issue analysed. Still, context-informed textual analysis is central to the approach, with Wodak “perhaps (...) the most linguistically orientated” practitioner of CDS as described by Meyer (2001:27), and this paper carries out this type of analysis.

In textual analysis, DHA typically examines ingroup-outgroup construction. After establishing the topics of discourse, a set of discursive strategies — nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivation, and mitigation — is analysed in a given text or texts. The analysis then moves to the general linguistic ‘means’ (Wodak 2001:71) of discriminatory stereotypes and their specific realisations.

DHA originated as a framework for the study of heavily polarised, identity-based discourses, such as that of national or racial prejudice, with the identity aspect prominent even in analyses of potentially more general concepts such as that of Europe (see Krzyżanowski

2010). This heritage has much bearing on the analytical categories it proposes, in particular nomination, interpreted as “construction of in-groups and out-groups”, and predication, interpreted as evaluation, or “labelling social actors more or less positively or negatively, deprecatorily or appreciatively” (Wodak 2001:73).

Where the focus of the analysis is on a concept rather than a group, a different approach is required. Krzyżanowski (2016:309) notes “the increasingly conceptual nature of discourse”, or the representations of actions by individuals and groups as abstract concepts, and proposes that DHA be integrated with Koselleck’s concept history to better analyse such discourse (2013, 2016). To that end, he uses Bernstein’s notion of recontextualisation, originally describing the complex process of reordering and redefining elements of a social practice in pedagogic discourse. While the proposal has merit, the concept analysed here is not of the same order as the ‘key concepts’ examined by Krzyżanowski (or indeed Koselleck): the welfare state may be unstable and contested, but it is not as abstract, malleable, or prone to recontextualisation as democracy or multilingualism. Further, the focus of this paper is on micro-level, if context-informed, text analysis, unlike in the recent studies by Krzyżanowski.

This paper therefore modifies Wodak’s list of discursive strategies to better fit the material analysed. Since the central concept is always referred to as ‘welfare state’, nomination would not be a productive category, and is supplanted with what I term ‘delineation’ (inspired by Garland’s description of the different variants of the welfare state): the inclusion or exclusion of elements of social reality in a concept, or an attempt to identify the referent of a term in textual or contextual analysis. Interpreted as evaluation, predication is analysed in this paper, as are argumentation strategies, described in DHA as *topoi*, “content-related warrants or ‘conclusion rules’ which connect the argument or arguments with the conclusion, the claim” (Wodak 2001:74). Here, a *topos* is interpreted as a mental short-cut — an argument made from a premise (or, in other terms, a claim justified with a warrant) that need not be stated explicitly, either because it is familiar to the discourse community, or is considered self-evident, at

least within the given discourse community. Of particular interest for this paper is the impact of delineation on evaluation and argumentation. The remaining strategies, perspectivation and mitigation, are applicable to analyses of concepts but of less relevance to the examples analysed here.

3. Boundaries of the welfare state and political identities

3a. Methodology

To establish concept boundaries, the occurrences of the term ‘welfare state’ in the texts were examined to see whether the referent of the term could be established from the immediate co-text. This was possible for about a third of the text in the corpus, and only these were considered for further analysis here. In the most obvious cases, the components of the welfare state were simply explicitly listed, or a component – an idea, a benefit, or another element of the political system – was named as part (or not a part) of the welfare state. Otherwise, a critical stylistic analysis was performed, examining what Jeffries (2010) terms ‘relations of opposition and equivalence’ within the co-text window, whereby lexical items not necessarily related are interpretable as textual antonyms or synonyms on the basis of syntactic clues, which can include parallel structures, elaboration, or apposition. Similarly, in his early work, Fairclough writes of relations of synonymy “set up in the text between words which are not synonymous in any discourse type” (1989:115), also mentioning antonymy and hyponymy in the same context.

The caveat that equivalence (or indeed synonymy) need not mean a perfect one-to-one relation needs to be made here; another reservation is that it may be evident from the context that an element is the sole salient component of the welfare state, but interpreting it as corresponding to the entirety of the concept may not be justified within the context; in these cases, ‘strong association’, in principle interpretable as metonymic, can be noted.

The texts where the referent of the term ‘welfare state’ was thus established were then grouped into several themes of discourse. This

paper examines texts in the theme described as political identities, which refer to the welfare state to make a broader point about a political identity, usually one that conveys evaluation. The political identity is described as generally left-leaning or conservative, which is often expressed as party political identity (Labour or Conservatives in the UK). Not all these texts can be analysed in this short paper, and the sections below outline delineations of the welfare state representative of the four newspapers. While most texts in the corpus concern the British welfare state, the few that discuss the welfare state in general or in other countries have not discarded from analysis, exemplifying as they do British press discourses of the welfare state.

3b. The welfare state as welfare

Within this theme of discourse, one notable delineation of the welfare state is one where it is restricted to the system of social security benefits (or 'welfare'), either by creating a straightforward equivalence or forming a strong association, where the benefits system is its sole or most important component referenced. This variant of the welfare state is here termed the 'benefits-based welfare state', and texts where it serves to construct political identities occur in all newspapers under analysis.

All four newspapers have texts where the benefits-based welfare state occurs within the theme of political identities. One example from *The Telegraph* has been excerpted from a column conveying extensive criticism of Blairite Labour as an impossible project just ahead of the 2010 general election:

(1) Reconciling the new commitment to individualism with the traditional class loyalties of the Left turned out to be very expensive indeed: only by extending the welfare state to cover everyone could you abolish the distinctions between the poor, who were dependent on the state, and the "privileged", who were free and selfdetermining.

Anthony Giddens, in his seminal New Labour treatise *The Third Way*, wrote: "There will never be a common morality of the citizenship until a majority of the population benefits from the welfare state." It is not surprising that in 13 years, Labour has effectively bankrupted the country in pursuit of that goal. What is remarkable is that so few people over that period noticed how sinister it was.

The passage does not explicitly mention social security or other benefits, but it is difficult to conceive of another potential component of the welfare state that would be counterfactually universal and have the specified openly redistributive quality. Similarly, Giddens' quotation is difficult to interpret unless the 'benefiting' of most people from the welfare state is read as receipt of some form of — most likely — cash benefits: as it is, arguably most people in the UK already benefit from the services of the NHS or the education system. It is only when these advantages are discounted, and the welfare state restricted to the social security system, that the temporal clause becomes counterfactual. Further, the extension of the welfare state by New Labour referenced in the passage can only be interpreted as factually correct if the welfare state is understood as the benefits system.

Thus construed welfare state, the means of achieving Labour's aim of equality, is denounced in the passage primarily as expensive. The co-text has a stronger criticism of Labour's emphasis on equality: the party, in its paternalism, "never actually saw the inherent moral worth of allowing people to aspire, to succeed on their own terms and to live by their own values". This is consistent with a well-rehearsed conservative critique of the welfare state whereby the support provided by the welfare state prevents individuals from growth because it does not allow them to develop self-reliance (see King and Ross 2010), and as such is morally wrong. I refer to this critique, which recurs in the conservative newspapers (and is contingent on the narrow understanding of the welfare state as primarily, if not exclusively, the benefits system), as the topos of self-reliance. In this passage, it clarifies how Labour's aim of achieving a "common morality" based on the shared access to the system of benefits can be described as sinister, and Labour, the party of the welfare state, construed as morally wrong.

Another *Telegraph* example comes from a column by Peter Osborne, which departs from a discussion of the rationale for welfare reform to make a point on political identities:

(2) But with the passage of more than half a century, this moral danger embedded at the heart of the noble idea of a welfare state has become a serious matter. Just as Beveridge feared, the benefits system has started to reward fecklessness and irresponsibility. It has distorted decisionmaking (Mick Philpott's habit of fathering children so as to pocket state benefits is a grotesque example) and prevented people from taking responsibility for themselves.

The last government deliberately encouraged some of this. Gordon Brown extended the scope of the benefits system way beyond anything Beveridge envisaged. After 13 years of New Labour, people earning well over the national average wage were dependent on state benefits. Gordon Brown, in an act of great wickedness, had taken Beveridge's welfare state and used it to create what was effectively an enormous client base for the Labour Party.

Osborne, *Telegraph* 2013

The first excerpted paragraph establishes a synonymy between the welfare state and the benefits system by the elaboration relation between the two first sentences (where the second gives an example of a general point made in the first) and by the parallel between the attendant “moral danger” of the welfare state and the immoral behaviour encouraged by the benefits system. In the second paragraph, the terms ‘benefits system’, ‘state benefits’, and ‘welfare state’ are text synonyms, with the last of these premodified as “Beveridge’s” to underscore the temporal and conceptual difference. No other components of the welfare state are referenced in the co-text, which at one point notes “the welfare state and the National Health Service” as parts of the “Attlee inheritance” along with Keynesian economic policy, again indicating the restriction of the welfare state to the benefits system.

Thus construed welfare state has a clearly detrimental social impact, causing immoral behaviour rather than solving social problems. The causation is indicated in fairly strong terms by the use of immaterial action verbs (such as ‘reward’), and by treating the case of Mick Philpott – a benefit claimant convicted for setting fire to his

council house and causing the deaths of six of his seventeen children – as an example exceptional in the degree of repulsiveness, but not necessarily anomalous otherwise. The topos of self-reliance is also in play here, as indicated by the references to dependency and personal responsibility.

The social problems caused or aggravated by the welfare state are partly attributed to the agency of Labour, who “deliberately encouraged some of this”. The charge against Brown’s Labour is that, aware of the social ills caused by the welfare state (at least within the topos of self-reliance), it extended the provision of benefits in order to establish a client base of faithful Labour voters, in what might be termed a ‘votes for dole’ exchange. This view recurs in columns in the conservative newspapers, and constitutes what might be called the topos of clientship, giving the welfare state (and even more so Labour) a starkly negative evaluation. This argumentative shortcut is possible only when the welfare state is restricted to the benefits system.

A similar positioning of Labour occurs in *The Daily Mail*. One example is the following extract from a column – also by Peter Osborne, who had written for the *Mail* before moving to the *Telegraph* in 2010 – where the cost of the welfare state is an opportunity to make a point about political identity:

(3) As a result, the welfare state bill has soared. In 1979, when Margaret Thatcher came to power, it stood at £20 billion. It is now around £140billion – and rising fast.

Under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, Labour deliberately encouraged this dependency culture, creating tax regimes that heavily penalised marriage and encouraged single parenthood and a life spent on the dole.

Osborne, *Mail* 2009

The reference to the unemployment benefit (“dole”) and to single parents, a group associated in conservative press with the receipt of state support, to the exclusion of other components of the welfare state, strongly suggests that benefits comprise if not its entirety, then at least its sole salient component. The passage also mentions fiscal policy, however, which would indicate the broadest delineation of the

welfare state, the policy-based variant, which corresponds to the broadest variant of the welfare state in Garland's description (2015: 8). Nonetheless, with either variant, the cost of the welfare state is clearly burdensome, especially since its actions incite behaviour (unemployment and single parenthood) viewed as reprehensible in conservative discourses. The role of Labour, whose agency is emphasised, is again that of a villain, deliberately causing social problems. Neither the passage nor the broader co-text indicates possible reasons for Labour's actions, however, perhaps due to the existence of an intertextual argumentative structure — the clientship topos, where the gain is the support of voters — that can be filled in by readers.

Another *Mail* column devotes much space to what it terms “Labour's addiction to welfare”, but makes points about other parties as well:

(4) Tory ministers who talk about reducing welfare dependency - usually off the record, to avoid rocking the Coalition boat - are referring to generation after generation of claimants who have become unfit for employment by depending on state support. The truth is that the real welfare dependency' problem is with politicians on the Left. They rely on the distribution of handouts to their client state to remain in power. They were the ones shouting loudest when the Government announced tests for disability claimants. They fight to secure more benefits, not fewer. In simple terms, they see the welfare state as a means of redistributing income from the rich and comfortably off to the less comfortably off and the poor. It's only fair', isn't it? Without their dependence on fomenting class warfare by demonising the well-off and sentimentalising the poor, why would politicians of the Left exist?

McKay, *Mail* 2013

The opening paragraphs of the column (not excerpted here) refer to “extending the welfare state”, elaborating this as extending the provision of benefits. This establishes a benefits-based welfare state, evident also in the excerpted passage: the welfare state is defined as a redistributive mechanism, and the system of benefits is the obvious way of achieving redistribution. The definition is perspectivised (“they see the welfare state as...”), but the perspectivation does not invalidate it – if anything, it underscores the negative assessment of

thus constructed welfare state. It appears that redistribution itself is considered reprehensible, and reduction of benefits is self-evidently desirable – “fight[ing] to secure more benefits” is perhaps best interpreted as a criticism, which would be unlikely in a left-leaning newspaper. The negative assessment of the welfare state is also indicated by the reference to individuals being unable to work because they have come to rely on state support, indicating the topos of self-reliance.

Thus constructed welfare state is strongly associated with the Left, specified as Labour in the section heading and by the references to individual politicians in the co-text. Again, the topos of clientship can be noted, as an ulterior motive is ascribed to Labour’s support of the welfare state. In contrast, Conservatives are allocated a higher moral ground by opposing what is represented as excessive provision. Interestingly, the passage implies that their coalition partners, Liberal Democrats, are closer to the Left than to Conservatives: talk of welfare reforms is done “off the record” not to antagonise them. The party is not referenced by name, however, and it is Labour which remains the party of the welfare state in the passage.

In the left-leaning newspapers, a particularly interesting example is a *Guardian* profile by Amelia Gentleman of Rachel Reeves, a Labour MP and the shadow work and pensions secretary at the time, excerpted below:

(5) However, Reeves said Labour did not want to be seen to be the party of the welfare state. “We are not the party of people on benefits. We don't want to be seen, and we're not, the party to represent those who are out of work,” she said. “Labour are a party of working people, formed for and by working people.”

Gentleman, *Guardian* 2015

The excerpted passage follows a section where Reeves is critical of what she perceives as excessive use of benefit sanctions by the Coalition-run Department for Work and Pensions, but not of sanctions in general. The excerpt has two quotations from Reeves preceded by an introductory sentence, a pattern normally interpretable as a question and answer turn or a summary of a point which is then

elaborated in detail. There is therefore an expectation that any lack of co-reference between terms used would be signalled in the discourse. Here, no such signal can be discerned, and so the “people on benefits” in the quotation must be interpreted as a metonymic reference to the welfare state in the introductory sentence, otherwise the passage loses coherence. The result is that the welfare state is synonymous to the system of (specifically out-of-work) benefits. In this way, a Labour MP appears to disconnect Labour from what some consider to be its greatest historical achievement. This is likely a reaction to the pervasive negative evaluation of the (benefits-based) welfare state, either within the topos of self-reliance or in the discourse of welfare reform that goes back to New Labour (see Fairclough 2010, Brewer 2007), which evaluates recourse to benefits and lack of paid employment as largely immoral. It could also be — as indicated by the references to the unemployed — a reaction to an equivalence between the welfare state and its claimants, often construed as undeserving (see Baumberg et al 2012, Skeggs 2004, Paprota 2015 for an overview of the stigma associated with benefit receipt).

Responding to concerns about Reeves’ words being taken out of context, Gentleman published the relevant fragment of the transcript on Twitter and in reader comments under the interview², affording a rare insight into text production:

(6) “Is it a problem if Labour is seen as the party of the welfare state?”
“Yes of course, but we’re not. We don’t want to be seen, and we’re not, the party to represent those who are out of work. Labour are a party of working people, formed for and by working people – the clue is in the name. We are the Labour party – we are not the party of people on benefits. But the welfare state was always supposed to be there to protect people in times of need, whether that was because they lost their job, or they became disabled, or they had a child who is disabled, to help with the cost of childcare, to help you when you are no longer earning because you are retired. That’s what the welfare state was created for. I want to ensure that the welfare state is there for my children and their children in the future.”

² This transcript is misattributed to Labour leader Ed Miliband in an unspecified TV broadcast in Garland (2015: 3).

AmeliaGentleman [username] 2015

The transcript confirms that the phrasing used by the journalist did not alter the substance of what Reeves actually said, although the support for the welfare state which she goes on to express did not make it to the published article. The restriction of the welfare state to the system of social security benefits is even more evident in the positive examples Reeves gives, listing cases when state support is provided to deserving individuals. It is notable that the treatment of the benefits system as the sole referent of the term 'welfare state', reflecting the prevalent delineation strategy in the (arguably hegemonic) discourse of conservative press, is not challenged either by a member of the Labour shadow cabinet or by the journalist herself.

It is also notable that if Reeves' comment is indeed a reaction to the association between the welfare state and undeserving claimants, her statement does not deny this association and instead rejects the existence of one between (thus construed) welfare state and Labour, foregrounding political party identity (Labour as the party of working people, not the welfare state). She thus appears to choose to defend the party rather than the welfare state, which could be done by broadening the boundaries of the concept.

In *The Daily Mirror*, a column on the uprating of benefits reserves censure for Conservatives:

(7) Gordon Brown introduced tax credits to help millions of the working poor out of poverty. He used public spending for the benefit of the public. But the Tories hate welfare. And the state. So the welfare state is absolute anathema, and they'll do their best to dismantle it before the next election.

Routledge, *Mirror* 2013

The benefits-based welfare state is here established via a reinterpretation of the term 'welfare state' as a composite of 'welfare' and 'state', with 'welfare' a common term denoting social security benefits. Tax credits introduced by Gordon Brown are here a positive example of the functioning of the welfare state, with their goal described as "help[ing] millions". The emphasis on the working poor

ensures the recipients of state support are not judged as undeserving, which is typically the case in the discourse of welfare reform. Though restricted to benefits, the welfare state is represented as helping those in need and thus self-evidently good, in what has been referred to as the topos of help (see Krzyżanowski 2009). The Conservative opposition to thus constructed welfare state is expressed not in terms of rational arguments, but emotion, and delegitimised as such.

In all these instances, the delineation strategy of the benefits-based welfare state enables the argumentative strategies that achieve a specific evaluation of the welfare state. The passages from the conservative newspapers are strongly critical of thus-construed welfare state, and represent it as a detrimental or even sinister outcome of Labour policies. The passages from the left-leaning newspapers are less generalisable, which is representative of more complex construals of the concept in that part of the corpus. The passage printed in *The Guardian* (as opposed to the extended quotation) echoes the evaluation in the conservative newspapers and attempts to dissociate Labour from it. The evaluation is absent from the *Mirror* text, which does not mention Labour, but where Conservative opposition to the welfare state is essentially represented as immoral.

3c. The welfare state as public services

The other main delineation of the welfare state is one where the welfare state includes the system of public services. If specified, they typically include the NHS, education, and less frequently mentioned services such as legal aid or even libraries, and personal social services, such as social care. While the social security system does qualify as a service, it is relatively rarely referenced as such. This variant, here termed the 'services-based welfare state', is noted in all four newspapers but has a much stronger presence in the left-leaning dailies. It is only in those newspapers that it is used as a marker of political identities, especially in texts that do not reference specific reforms. In *The Guardian*, establishing a basic political divide with recourse to the services-based welfare state can be noted in a fragment

of a 2008 text on the immediate impact of the financial crisis on Iceland:

(8) Furious at enforced cuts across the welfare state, [Iceland's health minister] accused the IMF of acting only in the interest of international creditors. "As a leftwing politician, when it comes to prioritising the rights of property owners or those who own nothing, I tend to side with the latter group . . . People are really ashamed of what we did, but do you make cuts at a cancer ward in Reykjavik to honour those international debts? Would you rather lose £10,000 in a bank deposit or see a bed removed from your mother's care home?"

Bowers, *Guardian* 2009

Here, the threat to the services-based welfare state comes from the elites, specifically the financial sector, rather than political conservatives. The Left is established as a defender of the welfare state, which is given an emotional dimension by using the example of the health service and the specific images of a cancer ward and a bed in a care home being affected by the cuts. These images are likely to have particular emotional resonance: cancer can be expected to elicit a strong affective response (see Robb et al. 2014) and so perhaps reader sympathy, while the interviewer/reader is directed to imagine the care home impacted by the cuts as one housing his or her mother. One identifiable topos is that of help, and the elderly and cancer patients are designated as in greater need of it than creditors. Support for the welfare state is thus a matter of morality. The Left, in whose territory the services-based welfare state is positioned, is therefore represented as morally superior, providing an interesting counterpoint to the statement by Rachel Reeves on Labour not being the party of the welfare state analysed in (5) and (6) above.

There are cases of similar positioning in *The Daily Mirror*, as in the following excerpts from a column summing up the first 100 days of the Coalition government:

(9) He [David Cameron] insists that this is the time to carry out root-and-branch reform of health, education and welfare. It is not. (...) Reform should be carried out when the pressure is off, as Labour's reinvigoration of the NHS after years of Tory cuts would attest. Mr Cameron seeks to destroy our Welfare State by slashing and burning essential public services using the two-

pronged argument of government reform and deficit hysteria. This is undiluted Thatcherism minus the hectoring rhetoric. This is the same old Tory hatred of welfare and public spending.

Mirror 2010, 18 August

The welfare state is here textually synonymous to public services, specified as health, education, and welfare, and designated as “essential” and therefore self-evidently good. The timing of the announced reforms is criticised as motivated by what is stated to be ideologically-driven opposition to the welfare state on the part of Conservatives, which is declared permanent (“same old”) and described in emotional terms as “hatred”, and so established as irrational. The predicted result of the reforms is the destruction of the welfare state, a claim which functions as a delegitimising move on its own: where the welfare state is self-evidently good, destroying it is self-evidently wrong. Political identities of the main parties are thus re-affirmed with recourse to the welfare state, with Labour deemed a good caretaker and Conservatives the enemy of the welfare state (with the Liberal Democrats, the other coalition party, glossed over).

There are individual texts, only in the *Guardian*, which point to the potential of disarticulating concepts from political identities. One example is excerpted from a column by economist Ha-Joon Chang:

(10) If he accepts what the Conservatives define as the left, [Labour leader Ed Miliband] and his party will always remain on the back foot. To take the initiative and set a new tone in the debate, he should redefine what is left and what is right and reclaim territory from the other parties. Take the issues of fairness and social cohesion, which the Labour party tends to see as "leftwing" turf. It is wrong to think no one on the right cares about these things. Don't forget that it was the arch-conservative Otto von Bismarck who introduced the world's first welfare state policies (public industrial accident insurance in 1871 and public health insurance in 1883).

Chang, *Guardian* 2010

The text hypothesises a reversal of the axiological claim posited in (8) and (9) above, noting that if the Left is considered undesirable, so are its associated concepts. The services-based welfare state serves as an

example of a concept whose components, as exemplified in the text, have origins cutting across political divides, allowing the possibility of consensus on what matters in the face of tribalism. Nonetheless, this is an exception in the corpus, and most *Guardian* and all *Mirror* texts in this theme of discourse work to reinforce the connection between Labour and the positively-evaluated services-based welfare state, in axiological and emotional categories.

4. Concluding remarks

It is notable that in the texts analysed here, or indeed in the broader corpus, there are no instances of concept boundaries being resisted, or attempts to specify or clarify them. This might indicate that the reference to the two variants of the concept may not be fully intentional or self-conscious, instead reflecting a person's understanding of the term.

Nonetheless, it is clear from the analysis that the way the welfare state is drawn in discourse makes a material importance to its axiology within different political ideologies. Its boundaries affect not only evaluation, however; certain argumentation strategies (the topos of clientship is one example) rely on a specific variant of the welfare state and would not be comprehensible with another. It therefore appears reasonable to propose that concept boundaries be considered when analysing concept-heavy texts in DHA.

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