Social Policy & Society (2020) 19:4, 585–588
© Cambridge University Press 2020. doi:10.1017/S1474746420000329

Introduction
Global Welfare Regimes Revisited

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The study of comparative and global social policy has produced voluminous studies with research branching out in wide and complex directions. Both comparative and global social policy, including aspects of transnational social policy, have also had a strong focus on exploring and analysing social policy in the context of the Global South (Surender and Walker, 2013; Midgley *et al*., 2019).

The volume edited by Ian Gough, Geoff Wood and their collaborators, *Insecurity and Welfare Regimes in Asia, Africa and Latin America* was an influential attempt to bridge comparative social policy and development studies. The volume explored what lessons can be drawn from the worlds of welfare capitalism research with Gough (2004) suggesting the addition of two regime types, i.e. 'informal security' and 'insecurity welfare regimes' into Esping-Andersen's (1990) typology of 'welfare *state* regimes'. The two additional welfare regime categorisations highlighted the continuing reliance on informal networks of provision in some regions, while in others welfare regimes assumed a humanitarian scope, preserving well-being against chronic insecurity and conflict (Gough *et al*., 2004). This welfare modelling attempt also raised substantive criticism, insofar as Western conceptual and analytical tools were adequate to capture politically different regions that ignored the historical forces, such as colonialism, at play (Midgley, 2011).

The themed section revisits Gough's (2004) arguments including how far the analytical categorisations put forward are still helpful to explain and capture welfare regime development across countries and regions within the Global South. Additionally, the themed section utilises cross-national comparisons with case studies that are contextualised within their respective regional settings to analytically capture transition, stasis, convergence and divergence both within and across welfare regimes. Finally, the themed section aims to enrich the methodological tools available for capturing welfare development with contributors utilising a range of methodological approaches: including qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches comprising case studies, interviews, surveys and set-theoretical ideal types.

Research agendas on welfare regime development in the Global South

The themed section comprises five original research articles and a review article. The research articles explore welfare regime developments in Africa and Latin America based on selected case studies of Ghana and Mexico, while there are three comparative articles

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746420000329 Published online by Cambridge University Press

focusing on East Asia, Southeast Asia and finally one that focuses on gender and crosscuts Global North and Global South cases.

In the review article, Roumpakis revisits the influential work of Gough (2004) and reviews selected publications to reflect on how far scholars developed, complemented and questioned Gough's approach. The article puts forward two research directions for global welfare regime research; first to utilise historically grounded explanations for the development of welfare regimes regionally and globally, and second to systematically explore how non-statutory provisions, including family and community relationships, interact with and are often conditioned by statutory provisions (or a lack thereof).

The first of the original research articles, by Yang and Kühner, comparatively test Gough's thesis on the 'limits of the productivist regimes'. Employing set-theoretic methods they examine welfare development in six East Asian societies (i.e. Mainland China, Hong Kong SAR, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan ROC) across six social policy domains at three different time points. Directly building on Gough's prediction of East Asian convergence towards either a market- or social investment-centred welfare model, the authors show that, except for Hong Kong and Singapore, all other welfare regimes underwent at least one *radical* change, and as a consequence switched between different models of welfare. This apparent policy variation has impacted on the role of the family in different parts of East Asia in different ways.

Sumarto focuses on welfare regime change in Southeast Asia and explores how the change undermined the regimes' own security. Employing the experiences of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, Sumarto finds that the regimes shifted from a 'productivist' to a 'quasi-inclusive' (Indonesia) and 'inclusive' (Malaysia and Thailand) regimes. Sumarto explains their different pathways mainly because of their different historical-colonial legacies. The new welfare regimes, however, remain less secure as they continue to rely heavily on family and community for welfare provision.

The article by Velázquez Leyer analyses how recent social policy expansion reforms in Mexico have affected the distribution of welfare responsibilities among state, markets and families and identifies the (de)commodification and (de)familialisation outcomes of the interactions between those three spheres. Changes in relevant indicators of four welfare areas (old-age pensions, healthcare, unemployment and family support) show that the expansion has not produced significant reductions in decommodification or defamilialisation because of: a) the explicit or implicit role assigned to markets in social policy design and implementation, and b) the processes of economic liberalisation which have enhanced the role of families for welfare provision.

Amoah revisits Gough's classification of many SSA (sub-Saharan African) countries as in/security regimes using empirical evidence from Ghana. The article uses a mixed-method research design to analyse public responses and attitudes towards general and specific (healthcare) welfare policies. The research findings demonstrate that most participants wanted more welfare spending (including on healthcare) but remained reluctant to rely on government provisions due to distrust and perceived inefficiencies in the public sector. The findings also demonstrate the continuing reliance on family and social networks as safety nets and often in preference to state arrangements. Amoah argues that Ghana's welfare regime may be gradually shifting from an insecurity regime to one resembling the *less effective* informal security regime.

Finally, the themed section closes with a comparative research study on gender and (in)formal employment and care. Roumpakis builds from the work of Gough *et al*. (2004)

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746420000329 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to reconceptualise 'informality' and expand the focus of the global welfare regime debates into the sphere of production and social reproduction. Roumpakis finds that the size of the informal economy, including employment and unpaid time spent on domestic chores and care work is extensive, indicating the importance of informality and gender inequalities both in the sphere of production and social reproduction not just in Global South but also North welfare regimes.

Reflections and challenges ahead

The articles featured in this themed section provide new insights on welfare regime development and draw on a wide range of case studies, research methods and analytical approaches[2]. Yet they do leave some un-answered questions and challenges to be tackled ahead.

The contributions to the themed section did not discount the analytical categorisations put forward by Gough and his collaborators. They did, however, incorporate additional analytical approaches to capture the complexity of welfare regime reform within their particular cases and across their selected policy domains. Gough's assertion on the 'limits of productivism' indicated a teleological argument with evidence presented in this themed section demonstrating significant variation in terms of welfare regime development, let alone convergence to one or two particular paths of welfare regime change.

Additionally, all contributors to the themed section highlight the importance of informal provisions, and in particular familial arrangements and strategies for securing welfare in the absence of a comprehensive network of state support. Moving forward, one of the challenges is capturing the importance of family not just as a welfare provider but also as a collective actor who nurtures trust to its members, whether this is taking place in the context of inadequate or absent social policy interventions. In the absence of trust to the state (clientelism, conflict) or market (corruption), familial trust becomes an embedded characteristic of these political economies (see Papadopoulos and Roumpakis, 2019).

Finally, research on global welfare regimes needs to incorporate into comparative analytical frameworks the importance of local political-economic contexts (political stability, informality) and how the latter interact with actors operating at the regional or global level. One of the challenges ahead therefore is to capture this interaction both in relation to their timing and enduring effects (e.g. colonial legacies). For this challenge, comparative and global social policy scholars interested in conducting research in the Global South, or any region for that matter, can learn much from global development processes, as well as human and economic geography studies. It might just be the greatest challenge ahead.

Notes

1 Authors named in alphabetical order.

2 Early versions of the research articles were presented at the Center for Population and Policy Studies, University Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia (August 2018).

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746420000329 Published online by Cambridge University Press

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746420000329 Published online by Cambridge University Press