Why Do We Need the Theory of Authoritarian Social Policy in Comparative Research?[1]

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I claim in this paper that scholars cannot fully answer the question of whether and how the political regime matters for the development of social policy unless the theoretical tools of comparative research are adjusted. The welfare state theory apparatus used in comparative research is democratically oriented. The assumption researchers make is that the development of social policy is the result of the political action of organized social interests. This orientation is problematic since vast empirical evidence suggests that social policy can develop in a number of other ways. The democratic lens of the welfare state theory developed partially as a result of the lack of comparative research between the capitalist West and the communist East during the Cold War and the influence of modernization paradigm afterwards. I pull together the existing research that uses the non-democratic understanding of social policy and distinguish three themes in this research agenda: (1) the policy formation process with proactive elites and alternative feedback mechanisms; (2) the state as an institutional environment; and (3) the meanings of social policy unrelated to civil rights. I suggest that the theory of authoritarian social policy should be introduced into comparative research to balance the existing democratic orientation and that countries with hybrid regimes are the best sites to marry the democratic theory of social policy with the authoritarian one.

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The question whether the political regime matters for the development of welfare systems is among the central ones in comparative scholarship on social policy. Since democracy occupies a special place in the values and the political space of the developed world, its connection to better security of people's wellbeing is of particular interest for scholars. Uncovering the mismatches between the declared democratic values and their distortions in the democratic practice helps to question what a real democracy should be like. Connection between authoritarianism and poor outcomes of human wellbeing points at democracy as at least a partial solution of social problems around the world.

This paper does not dispute whether democracy is consequential for social policy. Rather it questions whether it is possible to answer how the political regime influences welfare policies with the theoretical apparatus currently used in comparative research. I suggest that the difficulties of the comparative social policy scholarship may stem from using the democratic lens characteristic of the welfare state theory, i.e. from the assumption that social policy is the result of the political action of organized social interests. To achieve a balanced picture, this democratic lens should be supplemented with alternative theoretical tools provided by the existing studies of social policy in authoritarian contexts. So far few attempts to pull these alternative tools together have been made, and these tools have not been used in comparative studies exploring the impact of the political regime.

The democratic lens in comparative research on social policy

Studies that attempt to answer the question about the influence of the political regime on social policy should ideally include cases with some variation on the independent variable, i.e. both democratic and non-democratic countries. Research on single cases or groups of countries with similar political regimes serves as a necessary knowledge base about the particular mechanisms of social policy formation and implementation. Such studies, though, cannot fully answer the question: does the regime

matter? In the section below I will only consider the studies that (1) questioned the impact of political regime on social policy and (2) included both democratic and authoritarian cases.

The mixed results of comparative research

To date, the comparative research on social policy has yielded highly mixed results about whether the political regime matters. The earlier studies[2] comparing countries with different types of political regimes have concluded that "political system is a weak predictor of major components of public consumption spending" (Wilensky 1974, 18; see also Rodrik 1998, 1002) compared to the level of economic development or the degree of economic openness. These studies have been criticized for ignoring domestic political variables that may have explained or complicated the picture (Rudra and Haggard 2005)[3].

The majority of recent studies claim that democracy matters[4] for social policy outcomes (Rudra 2002; Rudra and Haggard 2005; Cook 2007; Haggard and Kaufman 2008). Democratic regimes allow different social groups to put their demands for protection on the political agenda, and social policy expands as a result of pressure from those groups. Literature on redistribution and political regime also confirms that democracies redistribute more than authoritarian regimes because their political institutions are inclusive of the groups demanding protection (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2005; Acemoglu and Robinson 2012).

[2] The earlier studies cited here specifically addressed the question whether socialist/communist countries were different from the rest of the sample. The authors considered this question to be not only about the economic system, but also about the political one.

[3] Mares (2005) later showed that even when domestic political variables were taken into account, the political regime was not statistically significant once the external risk variables were added into the model.

[4] Some scholars find that democracy and economic variables are intertwined. Brown and Hunter (1999) suggest that democracies are more constrained by political factors, while autocracies – by economic ones. Adsera and Boix (2002) show that the political regime mediates the impact of economic openness on the size of government spending.

While scholars make the general conclusion that democracy matters, they also recognize that data show mixed patterns between the studies and sometimes within one study. For example, Kaufman and Segura-Ubiergo (2001) find that "(p)opularly based governments tend to protect expenditures devoted to pensions and other welfare transfers, which have primarily benefited middle-class and union constituencies." (p. 554-555) With different coding of political variables and a different sample, Huber et al. (2008) discover that highly repressive regimes also do not cut social security spending and are reluctant "to take on middle and upper middle classes, the disproportionate beneficiaries of social security schemes." (p. 432) Rudra and Haggard (2005) find that "authoritarian regimes are surprisingly responsive to labor" (p. 1042) – the outcome not expected under the general assumption of unreceptive dictators.

In one of the most comprehensive comparative studies on social policy, Haggard and Kaufman (2008) recognize that the data do not support an unequivocal answer to the question of whether democracy matters. They deal with the ambiguity in the data by emphasizing the importance of *ceteris paribus* conditions when tracing the influence of democracy, and claim that if a natural experiment was possible, they would expect democracy to have a positive effect on welfare (p. 361-362). *Ceteris paribus* argument also helps the authors to deal with deviant Eastern European cases that do not fit the expectation of authoritarian rule to preclude the development of welfare policies. In this region authoritarian regimes created quite extensive welfare programs, and the authors explain it by the "nature of underlying political alignments and development strategies" (p. 72-73) and "political and ideological commitments to a socialist transformation" (p. 357).

In a comparative study of several postcommunist countries with different political regimes, Cook (2007) finds that "(d)emocratic representation and bargaining in Poland and Hungary *have* mattered for maintaining welfare expenditures and moderating liberalization, although their influence is much weaker than in Western Europe" (p. 8). She argues that in authoritarian cases of Russia,

Kazakhstan, and Belarus, the bureaucratic-statist welfare interests and their place in executive coalitions were the key factors influencing the different welfare outcomes in the two countries. In Kazakhstan welfare and other state bureaucracies were politically marginalized, which led to privatization of the public sector and significant reduction of welfare effort. In Russia during the more authoritarian regime in 2000-2004, the medium welfare effort was sustained by the state bureaucratic actors and social-sector elites preserving their roles in welfare administration. In Belarus the inherited statist-bureaucratic structures remained strong, forming the base of presidential power and leading to extended welfare effort. Cook recognizes, though, that Belarus is a deviant case characterized by weak societal influence combined with the extensive welfare state and comparatively strong welfare effort, and this combination is not well handled by the explanations suggested in the book.

The democratic theoretical lens in comparative scholarship

One feature these comparative studies share[5] is the way they conceptualize the development of social policy and its connection to the political regime. The common assumption present in such comparative studies is that ***the development of social policy programs and the expansion of social benefits is the result of the political action of organized social interests***. Unions and parties are the primary agents representing the interests of various social groups and negotiating with other political actors on their behalf.

In these studies representation on the political arena is crucial for receiving social policy benefits even in authoritarian regimes. Rudra and Haggard (2005) describe their vision of authoritarian regime as sorting the population into the repressed groups that receive limited goods and the groups that are allowed representation and receive special benefits through social policy (p. 1019). Welfare programs are commonly seen as a reaction of governments for the claims made by the representatives of different

[5] With some exception of Cook's study where she concentrates on state bureaucratic actors in the authoritarian cases.

social groups. In these comparative studies political regimes, including authoritarian ones, vary depending on how much representation they allow: “We expect “soft” authoritarian regimes that allow some degree of competition and interest group organization to pursue more responsive social policies than hard authoritarian regimes that restrict them more completely.” (Rudra and Haggard 2005, 1019–20).

Political bargaining through representation mechanisms is a feature of democracy, and the lens researchers use to do analysis across regime types has a distinct democratic angle. Such an angle is characteristic of the welfare state theory in general, not only of the comparative studies of social policy. In Western social science scholars commonly assume that the welfare state has an intrinsic connection to civil rights (Marshall 1950, 10–11; Orloff 1993). Unlike the poor relief measures in pre-industrial societies, the contemporary welfare state emerged when the challenges of industrialization and urbanization in Western Europe and the United States combined with the new concept of individual rights, stemming from the American and French revolutions (Rimlinger 1971; Kuhnle and Sander 2010). Social and demographic changes that accompanied industrialization generated demand for welfare programs, and the inclusion of large population groups into politics in one or the other way facilitated bringing these demands to the political agenda. Many scholars agree that emergence of social rights is the result of prior institutionalization of political citizenship rights (Kuhnle and Sander 2010, 78), or, in other words, that the contemporary welfare state would have been impossible without democratization.

The causal link between democratization and the development of the welfare state has been widely criticized because of its inability to account for the ‘historical oddity’ that the first comprehensive welfare programs were introduced not by democracies, but by monarchies (Skocpol and Orloff 1986, 234–235; Esping-Andersen 1990, 15; Piven and Cloward 1993, 429). This criticism has mostly served as a

good counterargument against the pluralist perspective on the development of social policy, but it did not change the democratic assumptions embedded into the welfare state theory.

The democratic orientation of the theory can be traced in the most frequently used welfare state classifications. Both Esping-Andersen's liberal, corporatist, and social democratic welfare states (Esping-Andersen 1990, 26–27) and the more popular in Europe distinction between Bismarckian and Beveridgean systems are concentrated on democracies. A number of alternative classifications presented by Arts and Gelissen (Arts and Gelissen 2006, 178–180) include mostly North American and Western European cases. Scholars studying welfare states beyond the First world have discussed the inapplicability of Esping-Andersen's typology of welfare state regimes (Walker and Wong 2005; Inglot 2008; Aidukaite 2009; Szikra and Tomka 2009) and have suggested additional types of welfare states (Walker and Wong 2005; Rudra 2008; Gough et al. 2008). These classifications, however, did not treat the political regime as a meaningful criterion[6].

Does the democratic orientation constitute a problem?

The next question to ask is if the democratic orientation of comparative research on social policy is problematic, and I claim that it is. Historical evidence shows that welfare policies have neither been implemented only by democracies, nor originated from democracies. In fact, the majority of governments adopting welfare policies in the world have been authoritarian (Mares and Carnes 2009). Scholars of the welfare state are also well aware that the first comprehensive social insurance program was introduced by Bismarck in Imperial Germany in 1883. He borrowed the idea of using universal male suffrage to support the authoritarian state from Napoleon III and the Second French Empire, where Bismarck served as a Prussian ambassador. Bismarckian social insurance policies aimed at building

[6] For example, the distinction of productivist and protectionist welfare states (Rudra 2008), developed for the third world countries, addresses the governmental strategies towards globalization rather than the link of welfare to the political regime.

workers' loyalty to the state (Rimlinger 1971). A few years after Germany, the government of Eduard von Taaffe introduced the first bill on workers' sickness insurance in Austria, which was adopted in 1888 (Jenks 1965, 218). This happened a decade earlier than the first industrial accident insurance was promulgated in England and more than two decades earlier than the first similar laws were adopted in the United States (Skocpol and Orloff 1986, 239).

The Soviet Union also engaged in substantial redistribution practices, which included providing social services to the population. The Russian term "*sotsial'noe obespechenie*" was officially used since 1918, long before "*social security*" came into usage in the United States in the 1930s (Rimlinger 1971, 2). Nazi Germany significantly restructured the national welfare system in the 1930s to serve the goals of the National Socialist state (Rimlinger 1987; Bock 1991). In the post-World War II era, the Soviet workers had access to "secure employment, rising real incomes, and socialized human services" (Cook 1993, 1). Cerami and Vanhuysse (2009) write that the social contract in the communist countries "was by no means the result of democratic politics, or even bargaining with affected interests" (p. 224). Pre-reform Maoist China had launched many essential social policies (Dixon 1981; Walker and Wong 2005; Saich 2008). And many non-democratic countries in the Middle East and North Africa have achieved quite remarkable improvements in health and educational indicators after the 1960s (Karshenas and Moghadam 2006a).

Most of these countries have spent less for welfare provisions than their economically developed contemporaries, but even with lower expenditures social policy programs emerged and developed there. Moreover, if the size of the welfare state was measured not by the share of GDP, but by the share of public consumption in the total consumption, socialist countries had two to three times bigger welfare states than the capitalist ones (Kornai 1992, 314). Gal and Kligman (2000) point out that "in their ideals at least, the socialist states of East Central Europe were a form of "welfare state." Heavily subsidized foods and rents, full employment, relatively high wages for workers (as compared to other

strata), and the provision of nominally free or cheap health, education, childcare, maternity benefits, and cultural services would have warranted classifying them as welfare states, if these services had in fact been adequate in quality and quantity, and generally available. The structural similarities to Western welfare states are striking." (p. 63)

Given how much social policy in the world has been initiated and developed not as a result of the political action of organized social interests, the existing comparative research is likely to be missing a very significant part of the picture directly relevant to the impact of the political regime. This concentration on democratic mechanisms is not simply a consequence of a wrong theoretical choice on the part of comparativists. The democratic welfare state theory is a coherent research tradition with developed conceptual apparatus and corresponding empirical indicators. These indicators may at least formally be applied to any country that adopted the institutions of procedural democracy – elections, parties, – and this creates a common ground necessary for comparison. The theory of authoritarian social policy does not provide a similar common ground at this point. Scholars of comparative social policy recognize that the existing theoretical apparatus does not adequately address how social policy develops in an authoritarian context and call for more research focusing on the effects of the political regime (Haggard and Kaufman 2008, 24; Mares and Carnes 2009; Nullmeier and Kaufmann 2010).

Why the welfare state theory is democratically oriented?

Two reasons lie behind the underdevelopment of the theory of authoritarian social policy. First, there is less research done on the countries where the authoritarian political mechanisms would be most salient. Social science in general is concentrated in and on North America and Europe (Connell 2007). Data tend to be available on more developed, democratic countries. Political processes in authoritarian regimes are often deliberately hidden from the public, government sources are less reliable, "[m]edia outlets are often censored, government propaganda is widespread, and details of

government administration are concealed" (Ezrow and Frantz 2011, xiv). The students of authoritarian countries are much more at the mercy of their sources than the students of democracies.

Second, even when the studies of authoritarian social policy exist, they are not incorporated into the theory of the welfare state and do not inform the comparative scholarship. These works frequently stay confined to the field of history (for example, the works of Rimlinger 1971; Dixon 1981; Rimlinger 1987; Beck 1995) or area studies (Cook 1993; Walker and Wong 2005; Karshenas and Moghadam 2006b). The connection to democracy stays embedded into the concept of the welfare state and serves as a divider between what qualifies as such and what does not (Walker and Wong, Chack-kie 2005, 4)[7]. I believe that such an exclusion of authoritarian cases from theory building is a consequence of the geopolitical order of the 20th century and the influence of the modernization paradigm in social sciences.

The bi-polar world

In the second half of the twentieth century the world was divided into three parts: the capitalist Western (First) world, the communist Soviet (Second) world, and the rest (Third) of the world consisting mostly of the postcolonial bloc of nations (McMichael 2008, 43). The primary criterion of this division was the economy – either its type or the level of its development. Capitalism and socialism were the two options in the economically developed world, and the other countries were developing, i.e. catching up.

Social science in general and welfare state scholarship in particular was profoundly influenced by this global division. Scholars admitted that communist countries had extensive welfare states, but most agreed that "the "communist welfare state" should (…) be analyzed as a *unique* phenomenon

[7] For example, Flora and Heidenheimer (1981a, 22) have cut off the German Empire from the family of welfare states: "The real beginning of the modern welfare state, however, had to await the transformation of the absolutist state into mass democracy … ." Similarly, Orloff (2009) uses democracy as the first checkpoint to start looking for a system of social provision: "As democratization and development have proceeded in other parts of the world – East Asia and Latin America – one finds emerging or expanding systems of social provision, too, … . There are not systems that can actually claim to be welfare states in much of the global South, … ".

shaped by Marxist-Leninist ideology and the skewed logic of the command economy" (Inglot 2008, 22). For example, in his famous study, Rimlinger (1971) viewed the capitalist West and the communist East as alternative economic systems and discussed the functions of social security under the free market and the centrally planned command economy separately, as serving different goals under different circumstances. Gal and Kligman (2000) note that "(d)uring the Cold War, political stances on both sides emphasized the differences in systems and thus generally precluded comparative approaches that would recognize parallels between Western welfare states and communist systems." (p.63)

Several topics were usually discussed in relation to the communist welfare state. It was analyzed as "the authorities' second main set of instruments for influencing income distribution" (McAuley 1979, 260) along with regulated wages (see also Leung and Nann 1995, xxi). The global competition with capitalism was discernible in the discussions of shortages of goods and lagging behind the capitalist countries in consumption quantities (Kornai 1992, 302–311) as well as in questioning the ability of the Soviet leadership to translate the declared social goals into reality (Nechemias 1980).

Capitalist and communist systems differed both on economic and political grounds. Moreover, politics was indistinguishable from the economy. Although both the capitalist West and the communist East could be considered to have a developed welfare state that matured under very different political settings, the incompatibility of the two systems resulted in exclusion of the main authoritarian case of the twentieth century from the theories connecting the welfare state and the political regime.

The influence of the modernization paradigm

Orthogonal to the division between the capitalist and the communist worlds was the division between the developed and developing countries. After World War II, development and modernity became "a way of looking at the world, a new paradigm, suggesting that the ex-colonial world could also develop, with help" (McMichael 2008, 45). The collapse of the Soviet Union and the economic reforms in China reinforced this modernization paradigm once again. Liberal democracy now appeared as the

end of history and the final form of human government (Fukuyama 1992). The question now was not whether the world will go the capitalist or the communist path, but rather how close each country was to the ideal of a capitalist democracy. The path to the ideal generally lied through economic development (Geddes 1999; Przeworski 2000).

During the Cold War comparing social policies in the democratic West and the communist East made little sense since the systems were so different. After the Cold War studying authoritarian social policy made even less sense since all the countries were considered to be on the democratizing path, even if in different places. Social policy was seen as one of the components of modernization that went hand in hand with economic development and democratization. The democratic theory of social policy linking the development of civil society to the responsiveness of governments to societal needs was the only possible fit to the modernization paradigm.

The apparent economic growth in some Asian countries, the example of Chile, and the issues of postcommunist transformations in Eastern Europe made scholars question the connection between democratization and economic development, but not the link between democracy and the welfare state. The rise of competitive authoritarian regimes (Levitsky and Way 2010) where representative democratic institutions were formally present allowed cross-regime comparisons without changing the methodological gear. Regimes now varied with the quality of democratic institutions, and the question of the impact of the political regime was in fact the question of whether the quality of democratic institutions mattered.

Agenda for the theory of authoritarian social policy

To balance the existing democratic orientation of comparative social policy scholarship, it is necessary to frame a scholarly debate pulling together the existing research related to the non-democratic understanding of social policy. Questioning the assumption that social policy is the result of

the political action of organized societal interests means that we should think of a different ***policy formation process***, where the initiative comes from the top rather than the bottom and the exchange of information and political bargain with a larger society happens not through parties, unions, or civil society organizations, but through alternative mechanisms. Then, we should think of an ***institutional environment*** not focused on organized social interests, and I believe that here we should look closely at the state. Finally, we should reconsider ***the meanings*** that social policy can bear for different political actors and the engagement of those meanings with ideology and political legitimacy.

When I talk about the democratic lens and the theory of authoritarian social policy, the words "democratic" and "authoritarian" are the labels of theoretical tools and not a classification of the existing welfare regimes. Both of these tools can be used in studying social policy under different political regimes, and the utility of each one in a particular study is an empirical question, not addressed in this paper. Also, the evidence for the development of the theory of "authoritarian" social policy does not have to come from authoritarian countries since it is about how social policy is viewed and not about where the data come from.

Policy formation: proactive elites and feedback mechanisms

Loyalty and development as elites' motives

A significant amount of research shows that the elites – both the state elites and the ruling class – can be proactive in introducing and changing social policy rather than reactive to the demands of the society. The vast majority of studies assuming the proactive stance of the elites focus on how they use social policy to generate loyalty – either of the whole population or of a particular group. In his model of the political economy of dictatorship, Wintrobe (1998) treats loyalty as one of the two main tools that dictators use to stay in power along with repression. He claims that providing public goods is in the interest of the dictator (1) if it increases the loyalty of the population and (2) if it promotes general

economic growth and the dictator's budget depends on this growth. The first motivation has been investigated by scholars studying clientelism (the provision of private goods) and social contract (the provision of public goods) [8]. The second one has parallels with the developmental state tradition.

Clientelism is generally defined by researchers as an exchange of material goods or services for political support (Stokes 2007, 605). The understanding of clientelism that was prevalent in the academic literature in the 1970s portrayed it as an asymmetrical face-to-face relationship between the patron and the client maintained by the norms of reciprocity (Scott 1972, 92). More contemporary understandings of clientelism view it in the context of representative political institutions as a distortion of democratic politics with its ideal of programmatic distribution of goods (Stokes 2007, 607). Here, political support is manifested in voting for a particular party or candidate, who reciprocate with providing private goods and services to their supporters (Stokes 2005; Diaz-Cayeros, Estévez, and Magaloni 2012). With the rise of competitive authoritarian regimes, the use of clientelistic practices by politicians in such regimes has attracted researchers' attention (Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2004; Stokes 2007, 604; Gandhi 2008, 112).

In contrast to clientelism, the term social contract is not confined to exchange interactions. It is an arrangement between the political regime and the society rather than between a particular party or politician and their supporters. Its broad definition refers to "the appropriate organization of a political economy in general" (Heydemann 2007, 25). A narrower definition directly related to social policy describes the social contract as "a tacit agreement to trade social security for political compliance" (Cook 1993, 1). Social security in this context encompasses not only what is traditionally included into social policy (unemployment benefits, health care, education, etc.), but also government-sponsored

[8] The distinction between clientelism and social pact sometimes gets blurred, particularly when the larger contract of the state with the society implies more privileges to certain population groups– those that have the biggest potential for challenging the regime.

employment. It was very much the case in the Soviet Union (Breslauer 1978; Cook 1993) and is the case in the Middle East and North Africa now (World Bank 2004).

Throughout the history urban industrial workers have been the group for whose compliance rulers were willing to pay. A contract with industrial workers was the goal of Bismarck reforms (Rimlinger 1971) and of the many policies implemented by the Soviet leadership. Cook (1993) has demonstrated that in the Soviet Union industrial workers have benefited from a number of social policies that were not available to the majority of the population. Unlike in democracies, however, this was not a result of a strong labor movement and political efforts of organized labor unions. The Soviet industrial workers were in the position to threaten the regime, had they wished so, and their loyalty was of utmost importance to the Soviet state elites. Breslauer (1978) calls the political regime of the Brezhnev Era in the Soviet Union "the welfare state authoritarianism" because of the concessions the regime had to make to mitigate social and political tensions. Similarly, in communist China the state provided benefits for industrial workers, while welfare in rural areas was locally based (Leung and Nann 1995). Obtaining the support of the working and the middle class was likely the motivation underlying the establishment of special entitlements to government workers and the land reform in Nasser's Egypt and in Iran under the Shah (Karshenas and Moghadam 2006a, 4). The political elites in Latin America provided welfare to the urban working class to solidify crucial basis of political support in the cities (Haggard and Kaufman 2008, 71).

A separate body of literature directly related to the issues of social contract is the theory of the rentier state developed mostly for the oil-rich countries in the Middle East (Beblawi and Luciani 1987; Heinrich and Pleines 2012). This theoretical approach argues that "the availability of rents leads to different political structures, political processes and political outcomes compared to cases where profits prevail" (Richter 2012, 27). Profits have to be reinvested in the production process, but rents can be spent at the discretion of the government. Desai et al. (2009) show that the authoritarian bargain,

exchanging generous welfare and public-employment programs for political quiescence, is maintained by the availability of rents.

Both scholars attending to clientelism and to social contract see the elite's interest of securing the popular loyalty in order to stay in power as the driving force behind the development of social policy. This is the most theoretically developed alternative to organized social interests as the primary causal factor. Elites have introduced or adjusted social policy a preemptive strategy against social discontent. For example, in Prussia welfare policies emerged as a result not of the political struggle of the lower classes, but of an elite's concern about the potential social issues. The elite's vision of the problem was shaped by the experiences of industrialization in England and France, not the current issues in Prussia (Rimlinger 1971, 91). Nechemias (1980, 177) claims that the fear of popular unrest was the motivation of the Soviet leadership for extending welfare. Cook (1993, 3) cites Seweryn Bialer who wrote of the Brezhnev policies in the late 1970s: "The responsiveness by the leadership to certain aspirations ... can be described as an anticipatory reaction with regard to workers, that is to say, a response not to their actual behavior but to the leadership's fear that if the interests of the workers [were] not sufficiently considered, their behavior might [have] become disruptive and dangerous." Some democratically elected postcommunist governments acting in the situation of rapid institutional transformation, have also followed a similar anticipatory logic of avoiding popular protests (Vanhuysse 2006).

The second motivation of a dictator to provide public goods described by Wintrobe (1998), is related to developmental concerns: "(f)or a ruler who starts from very low (or zero) levels of power, the provision of basic public infrastructure (…) must raise revenue" (p. 114). Multiple historical facts fit this logic. Nechemias (1980) shows that during the Stalinist era in the Soviet Union health and education of the workforce were regarded as crucial for economic development. The conditions for labor productivity growth stayed a concern for the Soviet leadership even in the post-Stalinist period. Among the

contemporary examples, Asian governments are particularly notable for their developmental concerns and tuning their welfare states towards economic development more than towards mitigating economic hardships (Haggard and Kaufman 2008; Rudra 2008). Just like the loyalty-based studies, research on the role of the developmental state in expanding social policy portrays welfare programs as originating from the elites, rather than from the society. The difference is that the main motive here is enhancement of the overall economic development, not generating loyalty towards the elites.

Not only the state elites can initiate and promote social policy. Capitalists, the ruling class, may also actively participate in the development of welfare programs. As Mares (2003) has demonstrated, rather than simply resisting any kind of social protection, employers have preferences for certain types of social policies depending on the economic and political risks the firm faces.

Feedback and accountability mechanisms

A non-democratic policy process requires feedback mechanisms that exist beyond democratic political institutions or organized social movements. The most frequently discussed feedback mechanism is public protests that have triggered the elite's awareness of the existing social issues since the emergence of the first social programs. In Austria-Hungary, protests served as signals of discontent as "workers' demonstrations around the turn of the century made the leading elite believe that social insurance would pacify the working class" (Cerami and Vanhuysse 2009, 20). Piven and Cloward (1993) claim that the development of the means-tested social assistance programs in the US served the purposes of moderating social disorder and regulating the labor.

Robertson (2010) has shown that the nature of protest in a non-democratic regime is different from the one in democracies. Protests are not always backed by an organized social movement and do not always represent a move towards democracy. They may be orchestrated from above and integrated into the broader political strategies of the elites. Chen (2012) has demonstrated how the authoritarian regime in China not only tolerates, but actively facilitates protests providing institutional channels for

interest articulation. The author describes how discontent is first expressed through official complaints to the government and may later transform into more active "troublemaking".

Complaints have been adopted as a feedback mechanism by many non-democratic governments in the recent and not so recent past. Dimitrov (2013) explores the role of citizen complaints in the resilience of communist regimes. He says that complaints and the government reaction to them served as proxy accountability and helped "the central government to present itself as a guarantor of the social contract" (p. 278). Informal rules and norms can also be a mechanism of accountability in a non-democratic setting. Tsai (2007) shows how the embeddedness of state officials into the social networks of their communities allows their fellow group members to punish them if they do not provide public goods.

It is likely that different kinds of protest and non-democratic accountability mechanisms would have varying effects on social policy. Even in the absence of organized social movements articulating the interests of different social groups, governments receive feedback from the population and develop responses as well as create institutionalized channels for receiving such feedback. Comparative research should look into how different feedback and accountability mechanisms might have contributed to different policy outcomes.

Institutional environment: the state

States have always been built around providing some kind of public goods. For the early states it was defense, or warfare (Tilly 1985); later states gradually took on a bigger role in the citizen welfare. In the 19th century warfare state the military costs amounted to 25% of total public expenditure while social policy "was a residual spending item equivalent to only about 5 per cent of public expenditure or less than 1 per cent of GDP in most nations" (Castles et al. 2010, 6). This relationship is essentially reverse now in the long-standing OECD member states (see also Flora and Heidenheimer 1981, 5).

The impact of state elites and state structures on social policy has been explored by the state-centered tradition of the welfare state theory (Orloff and Skocpol 1984; Skocpol 1995). Inglot (2008, 35) writes that this approach in social policy research "indirectly opened the door" for studying countries with strong statist traditions because it revealed the autonomy of government bureaucrats, policy experts, and politicians from societal groups, unions, and political parties. This tradition has "brought the state back in" to social science scholarship (Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 1985), where organized social interests were seen as the primary drivers of policy process. Even though these researchers explored the role of the state in the interactions with the stable and powerful democratic institutions, some of their insights can be used to develop a theory for the settings where the state has never been out[9]. These insights are related to the autonomy of state officials and the impact of organizational state structure.

The question of state officials as autonomous actors having their own political interests has essentially been discussed in the section related to the proactive role of the state elites in shaping social policy. The connection between organizational state structure and social policy is closely related to the issues of state capacity. The transformation of state capacity is viewed by Skocpol (1995, 58) as one of the mechanisms through which path dependence in social policy works. The adopted policies "transform or expand the capacities of the state". These capacities subsequently "change the administrative possibilities for official initiatives … and affect later prospects for policy implementation." For Skocpol there is a constant feedback loop between policies and state capacities that shapes the pathways of welfare development.

In this feedback loop there are two elements: (1) how the state structure impacts social policy and (2) how social policy shapes the state structure. The impact of state capacities on social policy has

[9] Chen (2012) writes: "Unlike social theories on industrialized societies, China studies have never lost the focus on the state. There is no need to "bring the state back in." Few China scholars would deny the importance of the party-state in explaining social change."

been quite well researched. In addition to Skocpol's perspective developed for the US and Europe, scholarship on developing countries has viewed the strength of the state as a necessary condition for delivering public goods (see, for example, Migdal 1988; Kohli, Moon, and Sorensen 2003; Mares 2005). The influence of social policy on state capacity regardless of its impact on future social policies has received less attention. I suggest that it is here where the potential for further research lies.

State capacities are important not only for the development and implementation of social policies. In a setting where representative democratic institutions are weak, the state is the major political machine at the disposal of the non-democratic regime (Slater and Fenner 2011). The characteristics of this machine affect the ability of the state elites to stay in power. Social policy can shape different kinds of state capacities through its organizational hierarchies and networks that penetrate the society. It is a fare guess that the presence of the state in the citizens' everyday lives is provided mostly by state-run schools, hospitals, and organizations delivering other social services. These infrastructural capacities once created, may be used for different political purposes. For example, governments can use educational system the as an instrument in cultural politics (Vaughan 1997; vom Hau 2008). Vom Hau (2008) shows how the Cardenas government in Mexico successfully used the educational system to facilitate the full institutionalization of nationalism as the new official ideology. Similar processes have been observed in the societies where ideology, religion, or ethnic culture play a significant role in fostering the national unity. In such states, the centrally controlled educational system may be of a great help to an authoritarian leader (Karshenas and Moghadam 2006a, 4).

Building up state capacities may itself be the reason for adopting certain kinds of social policies. The existing scholarship provides a few examples when building of organizational infrastructure was at least one of the goals of adopting a particular kind of social policy. Rimlinger (1971) notes that in Prussia conservative capitalists who sided on many questions with the authoritarian state, favored the centralized social protection system in the mining industry over mutual assistance funds because the

former gave the employer a dominant administrative position, and in the latter workers were in charge. Steinmetz (1993) characterizes the central policy in Prussia as "designed to contain the working class by recognizing its social existence while attacking its organizational base" (p. 43). Cook (1993) points out that monopolizing the direction of organized workers' activity (unions) was one of the main ways to control them by the Soviet state (p. 11). Adams (2007) shows that one of the reasons for adopting "state feminist" policies by the Cameroonian state was the creation of the "women's national machinery" that could channel "women's activism toward state-delineated projects and goals" (p. 176). Finally, Harris (2012) demonstrates how the revolutionary regime in Iran used welfare to embed the state within the society and strengthen its capacity to resist political challenges.

The meanings of social policy

As I mentioned above, one of the components of the democratic theory of social policy is the connection between the concepts of the welfare state and civil rights. Developing an alternative theory requires an account of other meanings that social policy can bear. One of the most apparent alternatives is paternalism, which implies the division of the society into the elites and the masses where the latter need guidance and protection and the former are capable of it. In the extreme case, the elites act out of mercy and benevolence and the masses pay back with obedience and gratitude. Such an arrangement is very old (Rimlinger 1971, 8) and is extremely viable. The Enlightenment has fundamentally challenged this mental and societal structure, but has not made it disappear. In the industrial era paternalism may be different compared to the earlier historical periods: the elite status may not be inherited and the masses need more protection from the new kinds of risks. However, there is nothing fundamentally incompatible between capitalism and paternalism.

Paternalism may be viewed as a part of the mentality of the ruler and the ruled, or as an ideology legitimizing the political regime and the power structure in society. In democracies the ideas of civil rights, freedom, and equality served as an ideological justification for the expansion of the welfare

state. In other countries paternalism was used in the same way by both the authoritarian state – to claim obedience of the population – and its subjects – to demand protection. The idea that the ruler and the state elites are responsible for taking care of the masses lay at the heart of German welfare programs. Beck (1995, viii), who studied "the mental makeup of Prussian conservatives and officials", claims that "(a)uthority and benevolence are the terms that capture best the Prussian state's attitude toward its subjects"[10]. Exactly the same words are used by Leung and Nann (1995) to describe the system of social welfare in communist China. Kornai (1992, 55, 315) describes the power of the Soviet state as paternalistic in nature: "(t)he party knows better than the people itself what the people's interest demands … ." In some countries of the MENA region, the state-labor relations are also based on a paternalist rationale (World Bank 2004, 23).

Paternalism is only one of the possible meanings that may accompany social policy. Nationalism and religious values may also play a role both in the motivations of welfare providers and in the political discourse surrounding social policy. This discourse frequently serves the purpose of increasing the legitimacy of the state since only effective provision of public goods and services can legitimize a state's existence (Tsai 2007, 6; Soifer and vom Hau 2008, 227). Unfortunately, since the fall of the communism the ideological tensions about social policy are mostly discussed in relation to the advanced capitalist democracies rather than along the democratic/authoritarian divide.

[10] The same attitude was also characteristic of at least some of the capitalists in Prussia. For example, Carl Ferdinand Stumm, an iron and steel magnate, was also a leading spokesman for compulsory state insurance. In his words, "since the worker owes obedience to his employer, the latter is obligated, by God and by law, to care for the worker far beyond the limits of the labor contract. The employer should consider himself as the head of a large family whose individual members are entitled to his care and protection so long as they prove themselves worthy." (Rimlinger 1971, 109)

Introducing authoritarian social policy into the comparative scholarship

The amount of research attending to the authoritarian side of social policy is still much smaller than the one focusing on the democratic side. Nevertheless, attempts have been made to create theoretical models accounting for multiple factors (the elite's perception of political contestation, ethnic divisions within the society, external threat, economic resources available, etc.) and explaining the variation between authoritarian regimes (Desai, Olofsgård, and Yousef 2009; Eibl 2012; McCullaugh 2013). Mares and Carnes (2009) have modeled the link between the different political strategies of the autocrats and the character of welfare provisions created by different non-democratic regimes. They suggested that the research on social policy in developing countries should account for this causal links. Similar models connecting the different pieces of authoritarian policymaking should be developed further to build the theory of authoritarian social policy.

Introducing this authoritarian theory in comparative research is a separate and difficult task. Comparison implies a common denominator, and so far the freedom of social groups to pursue their interests in the legal political space has served as one. Putting together the democratic and authoritarian theory in one comparative project would mean that the authoritarian side of social policy has to be evaluated even in the cases that look democratic. Quantitative research would be particularly difficult since different statistics are available to measure democracy, but not so much authoritarianism.

Because of these complications, the best place to introduce the authoritarian theory of social policy into the comparative scholarship may be small scale comparative studies of hybrid regimes – those that provide easily identifiable empirical evidence for both the democratic and authoritarian visions of social policy. Studying hybrid regimes will help develop empirical indicators and research designs that test the relative significance of the democratic and authoritarian policy processes as well as the possible interaction between them.

Conclusion

In this paper, I claim that the political regime certainly matters in the comparative social policy scholarship. It matters as a theoretical assumption that tunes our conceptual tools to capture only the democratic side of social policy development. Whether and how the political regime matters for social policy in the real world is a question we will not be able to fully answer until we adjust our tools to capture the whole picture. Once we do that, we may discover that the political regime matters in unusual ways. Or that it does not really matter, and other processes drive the development of social policy around the world. To be able to get to the answers, though, we should stop fetishizing democracy in our scholarly exercises and turn to the other side of social reality.

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