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The Global Emergence of Social Protection: Explaining Social Security Legislation 1820-2013

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Abstract: While comparative welfare state research is mainly directed towards the development of welfare states in advanced democracies, the majority of people live outside the OECD and often face graver social risks arising from poverty and starvation. To secure a minimum standard of living, nearly all countries have introduced social programs to protect their citizens. Yet, the timing of when governments take on the responsibility of providing social protection varies decisively across the world. Based on data for 177 territories and independent states over the period from 1820 to 2013, we illustrate how social security legislation has emerged throughout the world. Although we find that the patterns and pathways vary strongly between different regions, the evidence shows that the proliferation of social protection is a transnational event: regional diffusion and ILO membership matter irrespective of the regional and temporal context. (← p. 503)

1. Introduction

Life can be “poor, nasty, brutish and short”.¹ For millennia the only protection against the vicissitudes of life was provided by voluntary networks such as family, local communities and churches. This changed at the end of the 19th century with one of the most salient developments of the time, the rise of social protection by the state. Nowadays citizens in the Western world take it for granted that the state protects them from being hungry and without shelter. The same cannot be said for many developing countries. One of the first mean by which states protected their citizens has been social security legislation. Social security is the protection that a society provides to individuals and households to ensure access to healthcare and to guarantee income security, particularly in cases of old age, unemployment, sickness, invalidity, work injury, maternity or loss of a breadwinner.² Even though the first social security programs were introduced more than 150 years ago in some countries, this process is anything but completed. Governments around the world, especially in less developed nations, are still introducing social security systems in current days in an effort to guarantee basic social rights and a decent standard of living. In this paper, we explore when and why states take on the responsibility to provide social protection for their citizens. Which domestic and international factors explain the adoption of social policy legislation?

Current knowledge about the introduction and evolution of social security legislation is largely restricted to the OECD world. Scholars have not only extensively studied the factors that have shaped the emergence of the welfare state in the long-term member states of the OECD but they have also provided detailed analyses about national specificities and regional clusters. Nevertheless, they mostly tell a story of independent national developments, often ignoring diffusion processes. In contrast, the few studies that focus on the emergence of social protection in developing countries emphasize the importance of international influences.³ Yet, our knowledge about the origins, pathways and contents of social security programs in the global

south is highly restricted.⁴ The existing empirical studies on the factors influencing the adoption of social policy legislation either rely on simple statistical methods or scatter plots,⁵ study single programs⁶ or cover only particular groups of countries such as Western democracies⁷ or African countries⁸. What is still missing is an analysis of the global adoption of social security programs that combines national and international explanatory factors, and employs up-to-date methods of data analysis.

This paper aims at filling this gap by providing an analysis of social security proliferation throughout the world for a long time span, stretching from 1820 to the present. Our contribution traces for the first time general global trends in social security legislation and explains long-term developments rather than the introduction of single programs. To examine the formation of social protection we analyze the national and international factors that led to the temporal adoption of the five main social policy programs (i.e. protection against sickness, injuries, and unemployment, as well as old age pensions and provisions for family members). We show that social security adoption is a transnational event: regional patterns of diffusion and the influence of the ILO prove significant for the whole time period all around the world. The level of economic development only plays a key (**← p. 504**) role for welfare state pioneers while the colonial heritage clearly shaped the welfare state formation in developing countries.

We commence our analysis by tracing the global proliferation of social legislation in a descriptive manner (section 2). We use maps and charts to identify regional patterns and sequences of program adoption. Although data on the introduction of social security programs does not capture qualitative aspects such as coverage or benefit generosity, they allow us to shed light on the factors that shape the take-over of central government responsibility in social affairs. In section three we provide a literature overview to single out the domestic and international factors, which from a theoretical perspective might shape the timing of welfare state formation. Next, we discuss the state of the art related to empirical research. In section

five, we describe the data and method used to examine the factors accounting for the worldwide variation in the timing of public intervention in social affairs. Using information on program adoption provided by the US Social Security Administration,⁹ we compiled a grouped duration dataset for 177 territories and independent nation states and estimate probit equations using a standard maximum likelihood procedure. In section six, we discuss our empirical findings of the probit estimation. The final section concludes.

2. Descriptive Evidence: Global welfare patterns

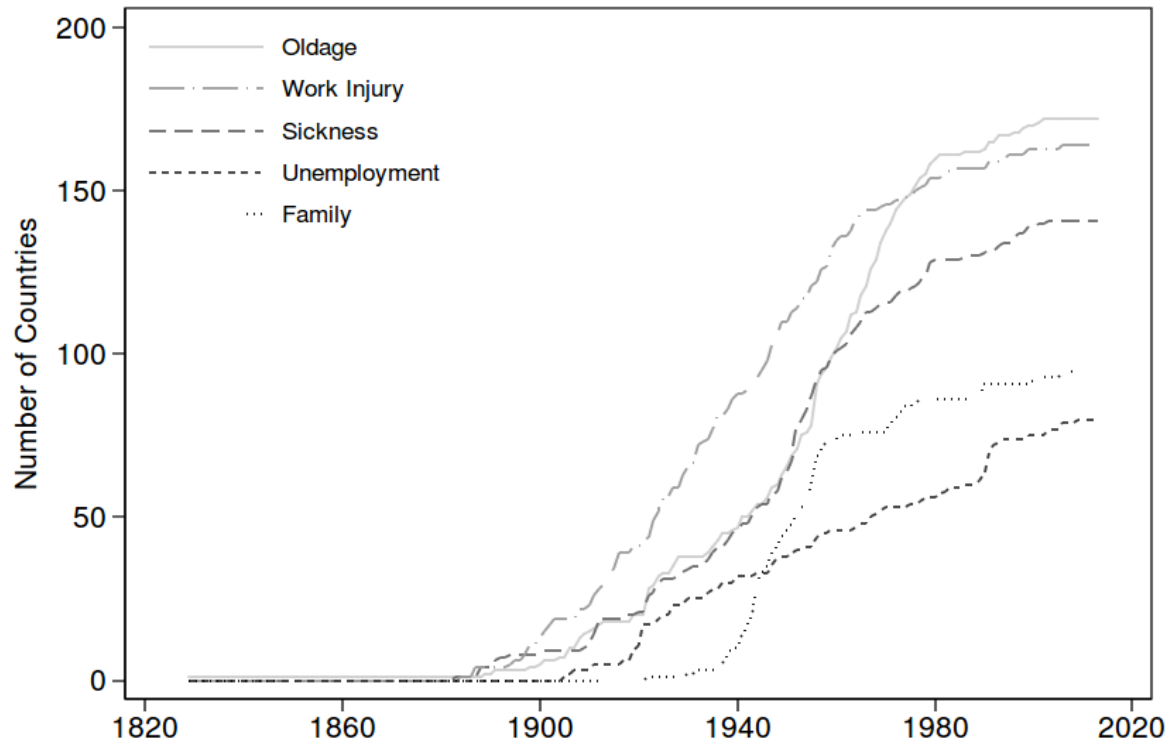
Before we delve into the deeper theoretical and empirical mechanisms behind the adoption of social security legislation state, we illustrate the global expansion of social security¹⁰. We map regional patterns and pathways as regards the scope and timing of program adoption in five key areas of the welfare state. Note that we only look at program adoption at the central state level without applying minimum criteria for coverage and independent of the generosity or type of scheme. While the choice by the central government to adopt a certain program does not say much about the implementation, coverage or generosity of the legislation, it nevertheless involves a very important political signal – both internally and externally. Policy-makers not only use social policy to enhance their legitimacy towards the international community but also to secure mass compliance of citizens. A look at welfare state consolidation in Europe illustrates that the early programs were very limited in size and scope, similar to many pioneering programs enacted in developing countries. Yet these first programs often had a budgetary impact and raised political expectations to enhance the generosity and coverage of welfare benefits. Figure 1 illustrates the proliferation of social security legislation in the world. It shows that the roots of the modern welfare state date back to the late nineteenth century when Bismarck introduced three social insurance schemes for sickness, work injury and old age in

Imperial Germany. By creating a national social insurance system, the political elite had hoped to gain the support by an increasingly powerful group, the working class. Social protection, which previously had been provided by voluntary associations, family networks, charity organizations, guilds, churches or local authorities,¹¹ became for the first time a public responsibility.¹² Other governments soon followed suit. In Europe, the Nordic neighbor Denmark introduced the same three (← p. 505) programs until 1898 and the Habsburg Empire (Cisleithania) until 1908. However, also in other continents, above all in the Americas, we find early welfare adopters. A remarkable case is Uruguay, which, even prior to Bismarck, had introduced old age pensions for the military already in 1829.¹³ Also in Argentina old age protection has been in existence since 1904, long before many Western countries had established such a system (for an overview of regional pioneers see Table 1).

Throughout the twentieth century public welfare provision became a core task for the emerging nation states. Nowadays, most governments offer centrally organized social protection schemes although not necessarily covering all five schemes. The two most common areas of social protection are old age pensions (~170 countries) and work injury schemes (~160 countries). Sickness is ranking in the middle (~130), whereas family benefits (~70) and unemployment compensation (~60) are the programs which to date have been introduced by a much lower number of countries. Historically, social security legislation started in the fields of work injury, sickness and old age. Although all three programs strongly expanded until the 1980s (when saturation sets in), old age pensions grew faster than the other two programs between 1960 and 1980, thus, becoming the most widely adopted scheme in the world. By contrast, the spread of unemployment benefits and of family assistance schemes occurred with a time-lag. The introduction of unemployment compensation started in the early 20th century, while family benefits were only established from the 1940s onwards. Even though family assistance started

belated, more governments nowadays provide family benefits compared to income support in case of unemployment.

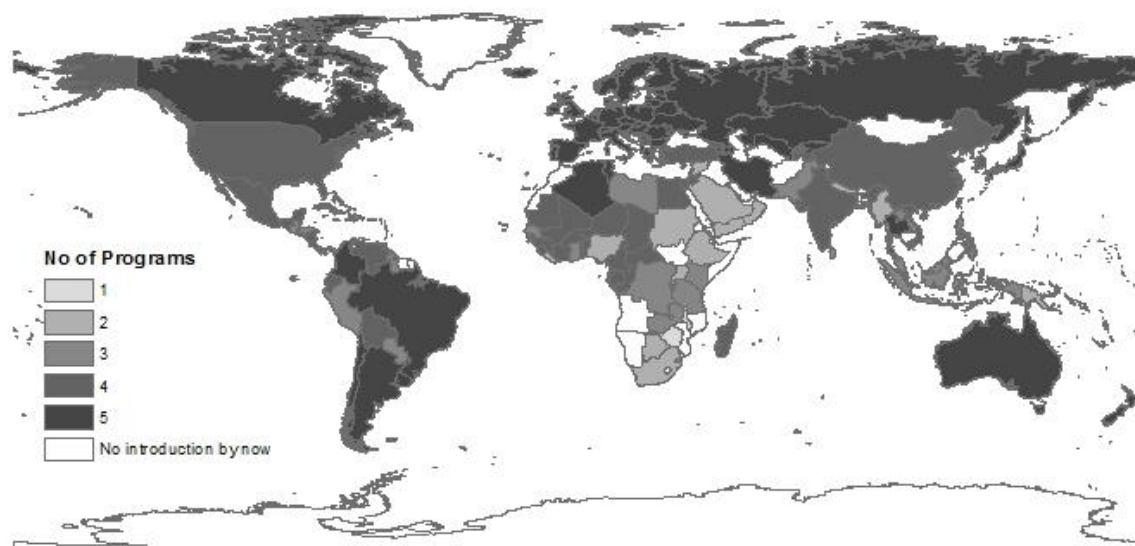
Figure 1: Introduction of Five Social Security Programs



Source: USSSA 2011-2013, "Social Security Programs throughout the World."

To gauge regional patterns, Figure 2 maps each country according to the number of welfare programs established at the central state level by now. It therefore (↩ p. 506) provides a first crude overview of variation in terms of the scope of social policy legislation between countries located on different continents. In fact, the map suggests that regional patterns exist: Program coverage is most extensive in Europe, where most governments have introduced all five programs. Only a few exceptions exist such as Andorra, where an unemployment program is lacking.¹⁴ Coverage on the American continent is also quite comprehensive but more heterogeneous than in Europe. A number of states such as Canada, Brazil and Argentina offer the full spectrum of programs, whereas several others such as Ecuador, Bolivia and Haiti have only established four, three or two schemes respectively.

Figure 2: Number of Programs Introduced



Source: USSSA 2011-2013, "Social Security Programs throughout the World."

(← Figure 2 p. 508)

In the African and the Asian-Pacific regions, the spread of social security legislation is considerably less comprehensive compared to Europe and the Americas. Here we observe pronounced North-South differences. In Asia, there is a clear divide between Eurasia including countries such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan offering comprehensive social protection, and countries located in the South-East of Asia. For instance, Sri Lanka only covers two programs and the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia have legislation for three schemes. Similarly in Africa, the Northern countries such as Algeria and Tunisia have introduced a higher number of programs than their South-Eastern neighbors.

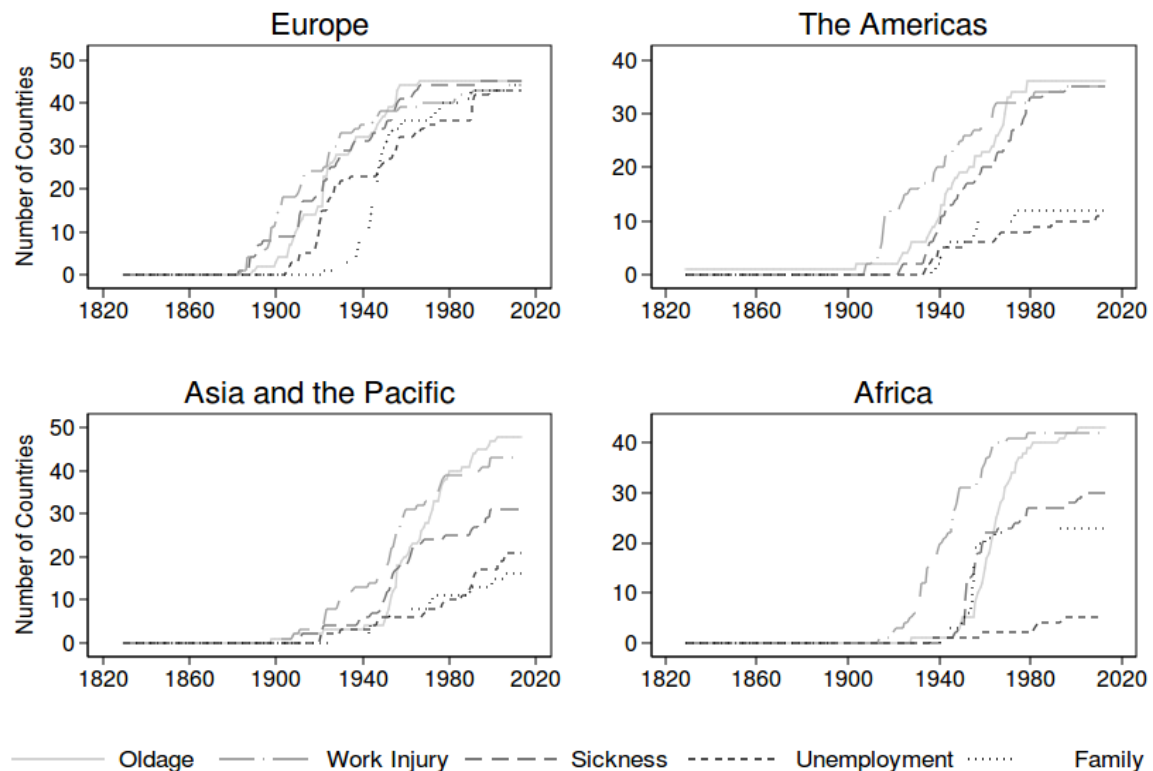
In sum, we observe regional clusters in terms of the scope of social protection: Legislative activity is highest in Europe and lowest in the South parts of Africa and Asia when looking at the five core social security programs, which are the focus of this paper.

Table 1: Regional Patterns of Social Security Legislation.

	Old Age	Sickness	Work Injury	Unemployment	Family
Africa (47 countries and territories)					
Number of Adopters	46	32	46	5	26
Average Year	1966	1963	1946	1971	1957
First Year	1928	1943	1914	1937	1941
Regional Pioneer	South Africa	Liberia	South Africa	South Africa	Algeria
Latest Year	2001	2003	1990	1994	2004
Latest Adopter	Sierra Leone	Ghana	Zimbabwe	Algeria	South Africa
Asia and the Pacific (49 countries and territories)					
Number of Adopters	48	31	43	21	16
Average Year	1965	1958	1952	1974	1967
First Year	1898	1912	1902	1921	1941
Regional Pioneer	New Zealand	Armenia/ Azerbaijan	Australia	Armenia/ Kyrgyzst Rep.	Australia
Latest Year	2002	1999	1999	2006	2006
Latest Adopter	Qatar	Lao/ Kazakhstan	Lao/ Georgia	Bahrain / Vietnam	Georgia
Europe (45 countries and territories)					
Number of Adopters	45	45	44	43	44
Average Year	1927	1926	1921	1943	1952
First Year	1889	1883	1884	1905	1922
Regional Pioneer	Germany	Germany	Germany	France	Estonia
Latest Year	1966	1993	2006	1999	2008
Latest Adopter	Andorra	Moldavo	Croatia	Turkey	Andorra
The Americas (36 countries and territories)					
Number of Adopters	36	35	35	11	12
Average Year	1947	1956	1938	1959	1951
First Year	1829	1923	1908	1934	1937
Regional Pioneer	Uruguay	Brazil	Canada/ U.S.	Uruguay	Chile
Latest Year	1979	1996	1994	2009	1974
Latest Adopter	British Virgin Islands/ Belize	Haiti	Brit.Virgin Islands	The Bahamas	Costa Rica
Global					
Average year	1952	1949	1939	1955	1956
First year	1829	1883	1884	1905	1922
Latest year	2002	2003	2006	2009	2008

(← Table 1 p. 507)

Figure 3: Development of Social Security Legislation in Different Regions



Source: USSSA 2011-2013, "Social Security Programs throughout the World."

(← Figure 3 p. 509)

Figure 3 shows the timing of program adoption by region to provide further evidence on regional pathways of welfare state development. In Europe, the origins of social legislation date back to the late 19th century whereas in the Americas, the expansion of social protection begins mainly in the early 20th century and in Asia and Africa in the 1920s. In terms of the sequence of adoption, Flora and (← p. 508) Alber¹⁵ observed for Europe that most governments first introduced protection against accidents, followed by sickness, old age and lastly unemployment. From a global perspective, this pattern holds for the first and the last scheme up until now.

In all four regions, work injury was the first program instituted at the national level. Early pioneers of work injury legislation outside Europe were, for instance, Uruguay and South

Africa in 1914 (see Table 1). However, there is considerable variance in the chronology of the remaining three programs: the adoption of old age pensions, sickness protection and family benefits follows distinctive regional patterns. For example, Latin American countries introduced retirement schemes quite early while in Europe work injury was typically followed by the introduction of sickness protection. Family allowances as well as unemployment insurance are rather uncommon in Asian and many African¹⁶ countries. In addition to these regional patterns and particularities, we should keep in mind that large intra-regional differences exist. There are even significant differences between neighboring countries such as South Africa and Botswana with regard to the number and the timing of program adoption. Nonetheless, our descriptive evidence suggests that regional clusters exist in terms of the timing and scope of social legislation (see Table 1). However, regional clusters do not explain what exactly drives the adoption of social security legislation. Therefore, in the next section, we discuss theoretical approaches which can explain these cross-national differences.

(← p. 509)

3. Theoretical explanations of welfare state consolidation

How can we explain the cross-national variance of welfare state consolidation in the world? It is possible to distinguish between four main bodies of theory: functionalism, power resource theory, institutionalism and international interdependencies. We briefly outline each theoretical strand before we discuss in the next section to what extent these factors have been found important influences for social policy adoption in the world.

Functionalist accounts attribute the emergence of the welfare state to industrialization and the concomitant social and economic structural change. While the social repercussions of the Great Transformation¹⁷ destroy or overburden traditional forms of social provision such as family

networks, guilds and churches, the increase in economic productivity provides governments with fiscal resources, which allow them to respond to growing social needs. According to leading functionalist scholars economic modernization was regarded as the “root cause of welfare development”,¹⁸ with some even rejecting the importance of politics and institutions.¹⁹ However, this view was soon challenged by macro-sociologists who interpreted the rise of the welfare state as the result of a much deeper modernization process which also comprised secularization, democratization, and the emergence of modern state bureaucracies.²⁰

While modernization theory emphasizes structural transformations in society and economy, *power resource and partisan theories* mainly focus on actor preferences for explaining cross-national differences in social policy. The former sees the welfare state as the outcome of a democratic class-struggle. A comprehensive and social rights-based welfare state is attributed to a powerful labor movement and its ability to form cross-class coalitions.²¹ In a similar vein, partisan theory expects political parties to enact public policies that favor their core constituencies. Given their strong working-class background, left parties and the Christian Democrats are the most powerful supporters of social protection, even though significant ideological differences exist between both party families.²² By contrast, liberal and secular-conservative parties are much more skeptical when it comes to public forms of social protection.

At the center of *(neo-)institutionalist theories* is the idea that welfare state formation is shaped by institutional veto points, state structures, and the path dependencies generated by previous political decisions.²³ Of particular importance for the introduction of social security programs is the political regime type. Democratic governments need to be responsive to the preferences of the electorate. Since the median voter has strong preferences for redistribution in light of a typically right-skewed income distribution, democracies are assumed to generate higher levels of redistribution than autocracies.²⁴ However, this does not imply that autocracies necessarily

maintain lean welfare states.²⁵ Given the structural lack of legitimacy of authoritarian regimes,²⁶ social unrest and political turmoil constitute a threat to the survival of a repressive regime. Hence, there is an incentive for autocracies to secure regime loyalty through social compensation.

The fourth strand of literature emphasizes *international influences* for the timing of program adoption.²⁷ The introduction of social protection can be related to policy (← p. 510) diffusion as countries emulate or learn from social policy legislation adopted by other countries. This particularly holds for countries with similar characteristics such as region, culture or economy as they share a variety of relationships. Under particular circumstances countries are even forced to introduce programs. For example, colonial powers typically imposed their notion of social security on colonies. The French Overseas Labor Code of 1952, for instance, forced the colonies to adopt work injury, sickness and family policies.²⁸ Coercive policy transfer might also occur in occupied countries during wartime. Moreover, international organizations such as the ILO play a pro-active role in the proliferation of social security. These organizations serve as transnational arenas for communication, promote the exchange of ideas or offer technical advice.²⁹

4. Welfare State Formation: Empirical State of the Art

The previous section showed that domestic and international factors play a crucial role for welfare state formation. Although there is a large literature on the role of these determinants, only a limited number of comparative studies have looked into how these factors have influenced the adoption of social protection beyond the OECD world.³⁰

As regards the role of economic development, Kangas³¹ shows that social policy legislation related to four welfare programs in 43 African countries is mainly driven by the ‘logic of industrialism’. Similarly, Usui³² finds that socio-economic structural change accelerated the

adoption of the first mandatory social program in 60 countries between 1880 and 1960. Yet, based on 59 countries, Collier and Mesick³³ come to the conclusion that economic development only matters for pioneering nations whereas latecomers often adopt the policy at much lower levels of development.

A number of scholars have also looked into the role of regime type beyond the OECD. Mares and Carnes³⁴ show that the majority of welfare programs were introduced by authoritarian regimes. Similarly, Haggard and Kaufman³⁵ find that most East Asian countries were non-democratic when introducing social security legislation. Yet, other studies show that regime type only matters under certain conditions. For instance, Cutright³⁶ argues that economically developed but not fully democratized nations show similar welfare efforts as democratic governments. This finding is sustained by Segura-Ubiergo³⁷ and Huber and Stephens³⁸ who show that in the case of favorable economic conditions in Latin American countries, the regime type is less important for social security legislation. In contrast democratic countries with a strong left labor power are more engaged in social security affairs than non-democratic countries in case of unfavorable economic conditions.³⁹

Overall, there is mixed evidence for the role of regime type and some empirical support for the importance of economic development. In terms of international impacts on social policy legislation, scholars have investigated the influence of trade relations,⁴⁰ the role of international organizations,⁴¹ diffusion processes⁴² and colonialism.⁴³ The classic study by Collier and Messick⁴⁴ shows that program adoption is shaped by processes of policy diffusion. They find that diffusion in the middle group of adopters is (← p. 511) particularly influential. Here, regional proximity to early adaptors seems to matter the most.⁴⁵ Similarly, Usui⁴⁶ finds that the rate of program adoption elsewhere accelerates social legislation. She further demonstrates that the impact of IOs is crucial for welfare state formation. Participation at ILO conferences increases the likelihood of social policy legislation.

In sum, the findings of the extant empirical literature exhibit inconsistent results for the influence of the political regime type, some conditional positive effect of economic development and positive evidence for the role of the ILO and international diffusion patterns. Yet, this evidence is based on studies which focus on different world regions and/or policy programs and use very different methods. What is missing is a systematic analysis of welfare state formation around the world. In the following we examine factors determining the global proliferation of the five main social policy programs from 1820 until the present.

5. Method and Data

Our dependent variable is the date of introduction of five types of social security legislation at the national level: compensation in case of work injury, sickness, old age, and unemployment, as well as family support. The data is coded from the country reports provided by the U.S. Social Security Administration.⁴⁷⁴⁸ Overall, we have data for 177 countries and territories worldwide. The inclusion of non-independent states is necessary as a large number of countries have introduced one or more social policies before becoming independent. India for instance adopted a work injury program under British rule, whereas other programs were introduced shortly after independence in 1947. For our empirical analysis we follow established practice⁴⁹ and drop those countries and territories with less than 500.000 inhabitants in 2010.

The dependent variable is measured by a binary choice variable coded 0 when a country has not yet introduced a specific social security scheme and 1 in the year when a country introduces the respective program. The countries are considered until the event happens. Once a specific program has been introduced, the country is excluded from the analysis of the respective program. We estimate probit equations using a standard maximum likelihood procedure. Ordinary probit or logit rests on the assumption that the observations are temporally independent. However, the probability of social security legislation is not equal at any point in

time but increases over time. Therefore, ordinary probit or logit would be misleading and the standard errors underestimated. We follow the procedure suggested by Beck et al.⁵⁰ in order to deal with time dependence. Beck et al. show that binary time series cross section data is identical to grouped duration data. They suggest estimating the models including cubic splines, as natural cubic splines capture the time dependence. The estimated coefficients of the cubic splines can be used to trace out the path of duration dependence. In comparison to time dummies, cubic splines have the advantage of providing a more parsimonious strategy. We alternatively checked t , t^2 , and t^3 as a cubic polynomial approximation in the estimations.⁵¹⁵²

The cumulative standard normal density (probit) is given as:

$$P(Y=1) = \int_{-\infty}^t \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{z^2}{2}} dt = \Phi(z)$$

with the following index function:

$$z = \beta_1 + \beta_2 X_{ki} + \dots + \beta_k X_{ki}$$

The index function is the underlying latent index of preferences for $P(Y=1)$.

To explain the date of introduction of each of our five social security schemes, we account for several domestic and international factors.

First, we include the number of other programs a country has already adopted. Previous legislative experiences should facilitate the introduction of further social security schemes. (←
p. 512)

Second, we control for the number of countries and territories in the respective world region, which already have the respective program in place. Following the literature, we argue that the more countries have adopted the respective scheme in a specific region, the more likely is a government to adopt the policy.⁵³

Third, we test the impact of ILO membership on program adoption as the organization has played a crucial role in the global proliferation of social policy-making since its initiation in 1919.⁵⁴ The data is taken and coded from the International Labor Organization.⁵⁵

Fourth, we include the logged real GDP per capita⁵⁶ to measure the level of economic development. In line with functionalist theories we expect a positive relationship between affluence and welfare state formation.⁵⁷

Fifth, we control for the number of years since a country has become independent⁵⁸ to capture the link between state-building and social security legislation. We expect newly independent governments to quickly adopt welfare programs to enhance output legitimacy.⁵⁹ Sixth, we distinguish between British, French, and Spanish colonies⁶⁰ to capture the impact of a country's colonial heritage. The argument is that colonial powers have not only shaped the legal system in different ways,⁶¹ but also social security legislation.⁶²

Finally, we use the polity2 measure⁶³ to control for the political regime type. The variable ranges from -10 (fully autocratic) to +10 (fully democratic). Obviously, this data is only available for independent nation states. Even though some types of autocracies are in need of output legitimacy via social security legislation,⁶⁴ we expect that democracies are on average more responsive to the social needs of the population.⁶⁵

With the exception of colonial heritage, time since independence, and regime type all independent variables are lagged by one year.⁶⁶

6. Empirical Findings

In our empirical analysis we proceed in two steps. First, we present the findings from a full model which covers 146 territories and independent states (table 2). Second, we replicate this estimation for a sample of up to 134 independent states (table 3).

Table 2: Introduction of Social Security Legislation around the World (1820-2010)

	(1) WORK INJURY	(2) SICKNESS	(3) OLDAGE	(4) UNEM- PLOYMENT	(5) FAMILY
No. of Programs introduced _{t-1}	0.420** (0.209)	0.714*** (0.179)	0.553*** (0.113)	0.253 (0.201)	2.554*** (0.327)
No of Countries introduced Program (Region) _{t-1}	0.218*** (0.0659)	0.200*** (0.0243)	0.0451*** (0.0138)	0.0334 (0.0405)	0.521*** (0.0404)
ILO-Membership _{t-1}	0.584* (0.321)	1.116*** (0.284)	0.434*** (0.147)	0.267 (0.326)	0.427 (0.658)
GDP per capita _{t-1} (log.)	0.994*** (0.261)	0.567** (0.227)	0.262*** (0.0908)	0.275 (0.179)	3.490*** (0.312)
Years since Independence	0.0274*** (0.00856)	0.0152** (0.00725)	0.00310 (0.00251)	0.00173 (0.00206)	-0.00258 (0.00930)
	1.183	-	-0.385*	-0.825	-
British Colony		3.609*** (0.789)	(0.218)	(0.740)	6.628*** (0.817)
French Colony		2.470*** (1.006)	-0.544* (0.278)	-1.339 (1.125)	11.48*** (1.104)
Spanish Colony		1.474 (1.006)	0.0353 (0.235)	-1.033 (0.692)	-0.693 (1.276)
Observations	17,390	20,092	19,047	23,945	23,945
Pseudo R2	.191***	.199***	.293***	.226***	.285**
No of Events	146	122	146	73	90
No of Countries	146	146	146	146	146

Notes: Time variables are suppressed to conserve space, Standard errors in parentheses,

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

(← Table 2 p. 514)

The findings for the full model are quite similar across the different programs. Although we do not obtain any statistically significant results for the introduction of unemployment compensation, the effects of the independent variables go in the same direction. The lack of significant findings in the case of unemployment benefits may be driven by the lower number of program adoptions. In general, the estimations reveal several interesting findings:

First, the likelihood that a country introduces a social security program increases when it has already introduced other social security schemes. Governments therefore seem to build on past legislative experiences. This is plausible for several reasons. State intervention in the field of social security reflects a certain notion of the state's role in society: governments which regard social security as an appropriate instrument to protect their citizens from social risks or provide welfare benefits in exchange for political support (**← p. 513**) are likely to react in the same way when new social risks arise. Furthermore, once a state has gained experience in social policy-making and built up related administrative capacities, every further program becomes less difficult to implement. Finally, the provision of welfare benefits to specific societal groups likely creates a demand among other groups for social protection.

Second, we find strong empirical support for the existence of regional diffusion processes. The probability of introducing a social security program increases if other countries in the same geographical region have already adopted the respective scheme. This finding underscores the notion that the welfare state is a transnational event.⁶⁷ For example, when the Iranian government implemented its first pension system after decolonization in 1954, the Iraqi neighbor adopted its own program in 1956. Similarly, when Iran changed its system in 1960, Iraq followed suit in 1964. Possible causal mechanisms promoting the regional proliferation of policy introduction include emulation, learning, or peer pressure.⁶⁸ Interestingly, there is no evidence that countries follow a global trend. When additionally including a variable that counts the number of countries that have introduced a specific program at a global scale, the coefficient turns out to be (**← p. 514**) statistically insignificant. This is reasonable since countries located close to each other typically are highly interconnected, share common characteristics and often are confronted with similar problems compared to countries at very different sites of the globe. Dense communication networks and resemblance reduce the uncertainty of governments when designing policies and therefore facilitate policy diffusion.

Hence, governments follow their regional peers when choosing a policy rather than a global trend.

Third, we find that the International Labor Organization has a clear impact on the national adoption of work injury, sickness and old age programs. Since its establishment in 1919, the ILO's main purpose was to promote social security on a global scale. The influence of the ILO is manifold. From the 1930s onwards, the ILO organized regional conferences where it offered technical assistance for the introduction of region specific social security programs.⁶⁹ For example, the ILO offered assistance in Burma, Pakistan, Thailand and Vietnam “to help governments draft comprehensive laws covering the first stage of social security (← p. 515) benefits”.⁷⁰ Moreover, the ILO worked out conventions and recommendations. The “flagship” Convention⁷¹ was the Convention No. 102 from 1952. It is the only international Convention which defines and sets minimum standards for nine branches of social security.⁷² ILO conventions often have been used as “a benchmark for formulating and evaluating employment and social policies”, for example in post-communist Hungary.⁷³ However, the role of the ILO is limited to provide support, assistance and justification for national governments which are willing to implement social security programs. The ILO has not the means and power to force countries towards social security legislation.⁷⁴ Yet, our findings suggest that also soft power of international organizations makes a difference.

Fourth, the level of economic development turns out as a welfare state catalyst: The richer a country is the more likely is the introduction of social policy legislation. Economic wealth not only provides opportunities to spend money on social security but also creates the demand for social protection. Interestingly, however, when splitting the period of observation and only analysing the time from 1919 onwards, the level of economic prosperity of a country is no longer statistically significant. The positive and statistically significant coefficient for the level of GDP per capita in table 1 seems thus to be driven by the welfare pioneers, i.e. the

economically higher developed western states. This finding sustains the study by Collier and Messick⁷⁵ who show that late adopters introduced social security at a lower level of economic prosperity.

Fifth, and contrary to our expectation, the time since independence is positively related to program adoption in the case of work injury and sickness. Following Flora and Alber⁷⁶ we had expected that newly independent governments would be quick at providing social security to gain legitimacy. However, the findings indicate that countries need time to mature and to build up the state and bureaucratic capacities that are required for social legislation.

Finally, the colonial dummies for Britain and France indicate that the colonial heritage clearly matters for welfare state consolidation. With the exception of work injury, British colonial heritage has a significantly negative impact on program adoption. By contrast, French colonialism tends to have a positive impact, above all on the introduction of sickness and family schemes. Possible explanations are the distinct legal systems and the different social policy priorities imposed by the colonial powers. While Britain advanced the view that each colony should introduce the level of social security that is allowed by its own economic output and that secures economic security, France followed a more centralized colonial policy, emphasizing an active role of the state in enhancing social and economic prosperity.⁷⁷ For example, the French Overseas Labor Code of 1952 strongly pushed social security programs particularly in the field of family, work injury, and sickness. Spanish colonies do not significantly differ from their non-colonised counterparts.

In a second step, we now examine the determinants of welfare state formation for independent states only (table 3). This allows us to test the impact of regime type, as polity data⁷⁸ is only available for independent countries with a population of more than 500,000 inhabitants. We restrict the discussion of our findings to the main differences to the models summarized in table 2. The most striking difference is that we now also obtain (**← p. 516**) significant results for the

introduction of unemployment schemes. This indicates that unemployment compensation has been mainly set-up in independent states.⁷⁹ This is a plausible finding as one purpose of colonialism was the exploitation of foreign labour. In dependent territories social protection primarily aimed at securing the reproduction of labour, mostly via compensation related to work injury and sickness. The repercussions of colonialism can also be seen in the fact that all colonies, irrespective of the colonial power, have a significantly lower adoption rate of unemployment programs. Also national and regional diffusion patterns, ILO membership, and the level of economic development have now a significant and positive impact on the adoption of unemployment compensation.

Table 3: Introduction of Social Security Legislation – Independent States (1820-2010)

	(1) WORK INJURY	(2) SICKNESS	(3) OLDAGE	(4) UNEM PLOYMENT	(5) FAMILY
No. of Programs introduced _{t-1}	-0.0615 (0.102)	0.159 (0.157)	0.461*** (0.109)	0.372** (0.157)	0.357* (0.206)
No of Countries introduced Program (Region) _{t-1}	0.0478*** (0.0131)	0.0849*** (0.0271)	0.0432*** (0.0128)	0.0752*** (0.0286)	0.158*** (0.0433)
ILO-Membership _{t-1}	0.0641 (0.194)	0.891*** (0.243)	0.402** (0.168)	1.264*** (0.489)	1.415** (0.615)
GDP per capita _{t-1} (log.)	0.332** (0.131)	0.143 (0.166)	0.229** (0.103)	1.007*** (0.252)	1.152*** (0.407)
Polity	0.0237* (0.0128)	0.0123 (0.0166)	-0.00422 (0.0123)	0.0323* (0.0191)	0.0244 (0.0259)
Years since Independence	0.0113** (0.00468)	0.0136** (0.00558)	0.00654* (0.00343)	8.14e-05 (0.00391)	0.00504 (0.00581)
	-0.242	-1.863***	-0.378	-2.831***	-
British Colony					3.710*** (1.265)
	(0.362)	(0.585)	(0.295)	(0.791)	
French Colony	0.254 (0.407)	-0.309 (0.718)	-0.195 (0.340)	-2.458*** (0.832)	0.774 (0.991)
Spanish Colony	0.0545 (0.238)	0.503 (0.530)	-0.226 (0.277)	-2.268*** (0.639)	-0.649 (0.640)
Observations	5,196	7,168	6,082	10,277	9,615
Pseudo R2	.172***	.149***	.210***	.204***	.217***
No of Events	83	80	109	56	47
No of Countries	83	109	113	134	111

Notes: Time variables are suppressed to conserve space, Standard errors in parentheses,

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

(← Table 3 p. 515)

In terms of the other four programs, the effects of the independent variables by and large remain the same. Only the significant impact of French colonial rule has disappeared. This is not surprising as French colonial rule had a much more direct policy impact than British rule. The French coerced their colonies to adopt several social schemes, whereas the British influence was more indirectly, yet also more long-lasting, mainly via the judicial culture. What remains is thus the aforementioned impeding impact of common law in former British colonies. Interestingly, in contrast to Brooks (in this special issue) we do not find clear evidence that democracies more likely introduce social security legislation. One reason for this might be that the rationales for introducing social security programs are very heterogeneous. Governments introduce social security schemes to reduce poverty and social inequality, others offer social protection as an exchange for political loyalty from societal elites. Overall, we find that some explanatory factors are relevant all over the globe while others only apply for a specific subset of countries. One factor that seems to be of global relevance is diffusion. Countries follow their regional peers with respect to social security legislation. In contrast, economic prosperity is most relevant for welfare state pioneers. For laggards other factors play a more important role such as colonial heritage (in the case of former colonies) and the ILO which has addressed questions on social security from the 1919 onwards.

7. Conclusion

“Social security is one of the most important means by which modern nations protect the welfare of their citizens”.⁸⁰ Yet, most of the existing literature on the formation of social protection has focused on domestic developments in rich Western countries. Almost no attention has been paid to the global spread of social security from a historical perspective. In this study we aimed to fill these gaps by providing a broad picture of the global proliferation

of social security since the early 19th century. We compiled a new data set based on information about social program adoption⁸¹ for 177 territories and independent nation states. This paper illustrates that, by now, nearly all countries have implemented some kind of social security programs, even the poorest countries of the world. Nonetheless, we observe considerable differences in the timing and scope of social security legislation across the globe. While continental European countries have introduced all five social security programs analyzed in this paper, social protection looks different in African and Asian countries where family allowances and unemployment compensation (← p. 517) are not widespread. This supports the notion that, from a global perspective, the Western model of social protection is rather the exception than the rule.

Our empirical findings support that social security adoption is a transnational event:⁸² irrespective of the temporal or regional context, regional diffusion as well as the ILO clearly matter. For all countries, we find that legislative experiences elsewhere pave the way for the adoption of further social security schemes and also the ILO turns out as an active international promoter of social security legislation all around the world. As regards domestic factors, the past legislative experience of a country influences its further progress in welfare state formation. Besides the rather universal influence of these three factors on global social security legislation, we also find time- and region-specific pathways of welfare state consolidation. Remarkably, economic prosperity is particularly influential for the welfare state pioneers, but not so much for the laggards. By contrast, the colonial heritage plays a central role for developing countries with British colonialism fostering a more passive role of the state in social affairs and with French colonialism supporting a pro-active state. Interestingly, we obtain mixed results for the political regime type. Democracy seems to be no catalyst for the welfare state per se, at least for the majority of social security programs.

While our analysis provides new evidence related to the global proliferation of social protection and the underlying driving forces, one limitation to our analysis is that we had to disregard the role of agency. Due to a lack of historical and world-wide data on government composition or union power, actor-related theories featuring prominently in Western-focused comparative welfare state research could not be tested. Resolving this shortcoming requires not only tremendous data collecting efforts, but also careful thinking of which actors matter in which way for social policy and how their power translates into policies in a diverse universe of non-democratic regimes. We hope that this paper stimulates such research activities in order to gain a deeper understanding of welfare state formation around the world. The following papers of this special issue make a step in this direction by having a stronger focus on power resources, and as such complement and move beyond the scope of our paper. While we were interested in the question when a state formally took over the responsibility for social protection, the following contributions move towards a more fine-grained understanding of generosity and need-based coverage by looking at spending levels or programs focusing on the poorest or most vulnerable segments of society.

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Notes

¹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, vol. Part1: Chapter XIII (1651). Chapter 13

² International Labour Organization ILO, *Facts on Social Security* (Geneva: International Labour Organization, 2013). 1

³ (e.g. Rudra 2008, Haggard and Kaufman, 2008)

⁴ for exception see Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, *Development, Democracy and Welfare States: Latin America, East Asia, and Eastern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), Evelyne Huber and John D. Stephens, *Democracy and the Left: Policy and Inequality in Latin America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), Olli E Kangas, "Testing Old Theories in New Surroundings: The Timing of First Social Security Laws in Africa," *International Social Security Review* 65, no. 73-97 (2012), Isabela Mares and Matthew E Carnes, "Social Policy in Developing Countries," *Annual Review of Political Science* 12 (2009), Nita Rudra, "Welfare States in Developing Countries," *Journal of Politics* (2007).

⁵ Jens Alber, *Vom Armenhaus Zum Wohlfahrtsstaat. Analysen Zur Entwicklung Der Sozialversicherung in Westeuropa* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 1982), D. Collier and R. E. Messick, "Prerequisites Versus Diffusion: Testing Alternative Explanations of Social Security Adoption," *American Political Science Review* 69, no. 4 (1975), Phillips Cutright, "Political Structure, Economic Development, and National Social Security Programs," *American Journal of Sociology* 70, no. 5 (1965).

⁶ Chikako Usui, "Welfare State Development in World System Context: Event History Analysis of First Social Insurance Legislation among 60 Countries, 1880-1960," in *The Comparative Political Economy of the Welfare State*, ed. Thomas Janoski and Alexander M. Hicks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁷ Andrew Abbott and Stanely DeViney, "The Welfare State as Transnational Event: Evidence from Sequences of Policy Adoption," *Social Science History* 16 no. 2 (1992), Eero Carroll, "Emergence and Structuring of Social Insurance Institutions: Comparative Studies on Social Policy and Unemployment Insurance" (Stockholm University, 1999), Alexander Hicks, Joya Misra, and Tang Nah Ng, "The Programmatic Emergence of the Welfare State," *American Sociological Review* 60 (1995), S. K. Schneider and P. Ingraham, "The Impact of Political-Participation on Social-Policy Adoption and Expansion - a Cross-National, Longitudinal Analysis," *Comparative Politics* 17, no. 1 (1984).

⁸ Kangas, "Testing Old Theories in New Surroundings: The Timing of First Social Security Laws in Africa.", Kangas, "Testing Old Theories in New Surroundings: The Timing of First Social Security Laws in Africa."

⁹ USSSA, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World* (Washington: US Social Security Administration, 2011-2013).

¹⁰ We do not separate between contributory and non-contributory social security.

¹¹ Peter Flora and Jens Alber, "Modernization, Democracy and the Development of Welfare States in Western Europe," in *The Development of Welfare States in Europe and America*, ed. Peter Flora and Heidenheimer Arnold J. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1981), Stein Kuhnle, "The Growth of Social Insurance Programs in Scandinavia. Outside Influences and Internal Forces," in *The Development of Welfare States in Europe and America*, ed. Peter Flora and Arnold J. Heidenheimer (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1982), Philip Manow and Kees Van Keesbergen, "Religion and the Western Welfare State," in *Religion, Class Coalitions and Welfare States*, ed. Kees van Keesbergen and Philip Manow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹² Stein Kuhnle and Anne Sander, "The Emergence of the Western Welfare State," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State*, ed. Francis G. Castles, et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

¹³ 1919, the date mentioned by Rudra in this special issue, refers to the introduction of noncontributory pensions for indigents.

¹⁴ USSSA, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World*.

¹⁵ Flora and Alber, *Modernization, Democracy and the Development of Welfare States in Western Europe*.

¹⁶ The only exceptions are former French colonies where family allowances are widespread.

¹⁷ Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, [1944] 1978).

¹⁸ Harold L. Wilensky, *The Welfare State and Equality. Structural and Ideological Roots of Public Expenditures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 35.:35

¹⁹ Frederic L. Pryor, *Public Expenditures in Communist and Capitalist Nations* (Homewood: Irwin, 1968).; Detlev Zöllner, *Öffentliche Sozialleistungen Und Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung. Ein Zeitlicher Und Internationaler Vergleich* (Berlin: Duncker&Humblot, 1963).

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²⁶ M. Schmidt, "Legitimation Durch Performanz? Zur Output-Legitimität Von Autokratien," *Totalitarismus und Demokratie* 9, no. 1 (2012).

²⁷ (Collier and Messick, 1975, Kangas, 2012, Mares and Carnes, 2009)

²⁸ Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

²⁹ Gerry Rodgers et al., *The International Labour Organization and the Quest for Social Justice; 1919-2009* (ILO, 2009).

³⁰ For studies analyzing the timing of welfare state consolidation in western countries see Alber (1982), Schneider and Ingraham (1984) and Hicks et al (1995).

³¹ Kangas, "Testing Old Theories in New Surroundings: The Timing of First Social Security Laws in Africa."

³² Usui (1994)

³³ Collier and Messick, "Prerequisites Versus Diffusion: Testing Alternative Explanations of Social Security Adoption."

³⁴³⁴ Mares and Carnes, "Social Policy in Developing Countries.": 97

³⁵ Haggard and Kaufman, *Development, Democracy and Welfare States: Latin America, East Asia, and Eastern Europe*.

³⁶ Cutright, "Political Structure, Economic Development, and National Social Security Programs."

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- ⁶⁵ Rudra and Haggard, "Globalization, Democracy, and Effective Welfare Spending in the Developing World."

⁶⁶ In welfare state research, political parties are assumed to influence social policy. However, many scholars argue that parties in developing countries are not comparable to those in rich democracies. The clientele and core positions are often not as established and influential or do not clearly represent specific class interests (e.g. Carnes and Mares 2009, Rudra and Haggard 2005, MacLean 2002). Partisan ideology in many developing countries is often based on ethnical, religious and regional cleavages that do not follow a left-right divide. The problem of classifying political parties might be one reason why there is no comparative data on political actors available for a global country sample and a longer time span.

⁶⁷ Abbott and DeViney, "The Welfare State as Transnational Event: Evidence from Sequences of Policy Adoption."

⁶⁸ Herbert Obinger, Carina Schmitt, and Peter Starke, "Policy Diffusion and Policy Transfer in Comparative Welfare State Research," *Social Policy & Administration*, 47, no. 1 (2013).

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⁷⁰ Rodgers et al., *The International Labour Organization and the Quest for Social Justice, 1919-2009*, 160

⁷¹ ILO, *Setting Social Security Standards in a Global Society* (Geneva: International Labor Organization, 2008). viii

⁷² (ILO 2008, 7)

⁷³ (Plant 1994, 159)

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⁷⁵ Collier and Messick (1975)

⁷⁶ Flora and Alber, *Modernization, Democracy and the Development of Welfare States in Western Europe*.

⁷⁷ Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa*.

⁷⁸ Marshall, Jagers, and Gurr, *Polity Iv Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2010. Version P4v2011*.

⁷⁹ In fact, 61 countries have introduced unemployment schemes after independence, compared to 19 states which have done so during colonial times. For the other four programs the introduction is more equally distributed. In the case of work injury programs, the majority (98) was adopted during the colonial period rather than afterwards (70).

⁸⁰ Collier and Messick, "Prerequisites Versus Diffusion: Testing Alternative Explanations of Social Security Adoption." :1299

⁸¹ USSSA, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World*.

⁸² Abbott and DeViney, "The Welfare State as Transnational Event: Evidence from Sequences of Policy Adoption."

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