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Welfare Regimes in the Global South

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Pathways to Redistribution: The Emerging Politics of Social Assistance Across the Global 'South'

1. Introduction

Fifteen years ago it appeared that the dominant trend in welfare reform in the 'developing' countries of the 'global South' was the 'neo-liberal' shift associated with the Chilean model (see Borzutsky 2002) and the World Bank's 1994 policy document, *Averting the Old-Age Crisis* (World Bank 1994). In a wide range of countries in Latin America and post-Communist Eastern Europe and Central Asia, risk-pooling and state-subsidised social insurance schemes were replaced, in full or in part, by individual savings accounts managed by private sector pension funds (Madrid 2003; Brooks 2007; Weyland 2007). Since then, however, it has become clear that another, quite different reform process has been underway in a diverse and growing set of countries across the South. Various governments have been experimenting with what Hanlon, Barrientos and Hulme (2010) call 'just giving money to the poor'. Cash transfer programmes such as the *Bolsa Familia* in Brazil entail a form of social assistance to the poor that contrasts with both the neo-liberal paradigm of marketisation and state shrinkage and the pre-existing 'northern' paradigm of social insurance. It also contrasts with the prevailing model of 'development', which has emphasised doing things for the poor. The World Bank itself has become an enthusiastic advocate of social assistance, including both the non-contributory, poverty-oriented 'pillar' in old-age pension systems (World Bank 2005) and the 'conditional' cash transfers pioneered in Brazil and Mexico[1]. The Bank warns that "without appropriate social protection mechanisms the MDG targets for 2015 will not be achieved" (World Bank 2003: 3).

By about 2008, at least 45 Southern countries were paying cash transfers to more than 110 million families (Hanlon et al. 2010: 47). Armando Barrientos et al.'s (2010) *Social Assistance in Developing Countries* database documents programmes in more than 50 countries, including 21 in Africa. Given the expanding coverage of these programmes, it is likely that at least one-tenth of the world's population in 2010 lived in households where someone received a cash transfer.

The new programmes give money to the poor in three ways. The first option is to pay wages, for work on public works programmes, to able-bodied adults of working age. This strategy makes most sense if poverty is due to unemployment that is transitory, either because of a sudden economic crisis that is expected to be short-lived (for example, in South Korea in 1997–1998), or because of seasonal variations in employment opportunities (for example, in rural India). The second option is to provide pensions or grants to categories of the poor deemed to be deserving. This strategy makes most sense when the poverty is concentrated among people who are unable to work on grounds of age or disability, and who are not looked after by those who can and do work. This strategy has been especially important in some former British colonies and dominions, including in South Africa. The third option is to provide grants to poor families with children, so as to improve the prospects of those children taking advantage of educational and economic opportunities. This approach has been especially prevalent in Latin America, through conditional cash transfers. A fourth option – giving money to all citizens – is rarely popular, because neither elites nor ordinary people believe that *all* people are deserving.

Unsurprisingly, the politics of reform varies between countries (and even within essentially federal countries such as Brazil or India). The context for reform is invariably when prior policies fail in some sense: when economic policies fail to prevent sharp recessions, development policies fail to reach the landless poor, social insurance programmes fail to reach households in which no one is in formal employment, poor families are unable or unwilling to support elderly or other hitherto dependent kin, or when children are not attending schools or clinics. The immediate impetus most often arises from the political power of the poor: not so much through the threat of direct action (in part because new welfare programmes typically take too long to introduce to avert direct action) but rather through political competition for the votes of the poor. Whilst neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition, such competition is a crucially important factor in the otherwise varied pathways towards redistributive, pro-poor welfare regimes across the South.

2. Typologies of welfare provision

These new policies are not easily accommodated within most existing typologies of welfare provision in the South. Southern typologies typically take Esping-Andersen's work on the welfare regimes of the North as their starting-point, but then seek to reconfigure his approach so as to take into account the rather different conditions that exist across most of the South.

Esping-Andersen's (1990) basic insight was that the differences between welfare states in the North were not simply ones of scale (some spending more than others), but reflected different designs. 'Who got what?' (and 'when?') depended not only on the *volume* of public expenditure but also on the details of *how* protection against poverty-related risks was divided between states, markets and kin (or community). Welfare regimes differed in terms of Polanyian 'decommodification' – i.e. "the degree to which individuals, or families, can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living independently of market participation" (ibid.: 37) – as well as 'stratification' and 'universalism'. Decommodification on its own was not a sufficient measure, because individuals could be decommodified unequally, or some people might be excluded altogether. Esping-Andersen (1999) later incorporated a more gendered dimension into his analysis, emphasizing also 'defamilialisation', i.e. the extent to which the state assumed responsibilities otherwise borne by the family (for example, care for children or the elderly).

In the first major analysis of the South, Gough et al. (Gough et al. 2004; Wood/Gough 2006) pointed out that Esping-Andersen's analysis assumed the existence of developed markets and legitimate, largely autonomous, 'modern' states. Much of the South lacks such markets and states. Commodification is incomplete insofar as subsistence agriculture persists and people do not rely on the sale of their labour or produce. The poor development of financial markets also means that access to insurance and savings is often mediated through local patrons. More importantly, for Gough et al., few states are sufficiently developed for the welfare regime to be seen as an 'actual or potential welfare *state* regime'. In many cases, the state does nothing for popular welfare, and in some cases predatory elites running the 'state' actually undermine popular welfare (including through violent conflict). Gough et al. label these 'informal security' and 'insecurity' regimes respectively. They recognise that states exist in the 'informal security regimes', but argue that states are primarily vehicles for patron-client relationships and the reproduction of political and economic inequalities. The consequence of this is that the construction of a more modern state ('declientelisation') is more important than, or at least a prerequisite for, decommodification (and, presumably, defamilialisation also).[2] Gough et al. (2004) and Wood/Gough (2006) also suggest that the concept of welfare regimes in the South needs to take into account other mechanisms or players that do not exist in the North, including the local 'community', foreign aid donors and remittances sent by international migrants.

Whereas Gough and Wood focus primarily on the character of the state and the importance of declientelisation, Rudra (2007, 2008) focuses more on markets, or more precisely on what the state does to promote commodification. Rudra distinguishes between 'productive' and 'protective' welfare states: 'protective' welfare states (such as India) focussed on the decommodification of formal sector workers (typically behind tariff barriers or subsidies), whilst 'productive' welfare states (such as Korea) prioritised commodification, especially through mass education, which pulled people into wage labour in export-oriented production. Some, 'dual' welfare states (such as Brazil) combined both emphases. This distinction accords with the distinction made by Gough, Wood et al. between different kinds of 'actual or potential welfare state regimes', but Rudra extends this to cover countries across the global South, regardless of the form or capacity of the state. Haggard and Kaufman (2008) make a somewhat similar distinction in their analysis of the differences between Latin America, Eastern Europe and East Asia. Under Communist rule, Eastern European countries provided comprehensive and near-universal protections and services. The East Asian countries offered minimal social insurance whilst investing in education. In Latin America, public protection privileged the urban middle class and some blue-collar workers whilst excluding peasants and informal-sector workers. Martinez Franzoni (2008) extends this to consider also the gendered dimension of defamilialisation.

These typologies are faithful to Esping-Andersen's basic approach in that they focus, in different ways, on how states interact with markets and families, but they are less faithful in terms of their relative inattention to the *distributional* questions that underlay Esping-Andersen's concerns. They are more concerned with 'what' states do, and 'how', than with 'who' benefits. This is partly due to their use of data on public expenditure, despite Esping-Andersen's insistence that aggregate public expenditure data does not reveal 'who gets what'. A different approach focusses on who benefits. Elsewhere I distinguished between welfare regimes focused on peasants, workers and the poor respectively (Seekings 2008). *Agrarian* regimes bolstered peasant agriculture through shaping access to land, access to product markets (especially through parastatal marketing) and production systems (through agricultural extension and regulation). While ostensibly pro-poor, the primary beneficiaries were usually better-off or 'middle' peasants, and the objective was as much 'developmental' as directly poverty-reducing. *Workerist* regimes promoted income security through state-sanctioned, corporatist risk-pooling among workers in formal employment, primarily through labour regulation and social insurance programmes that entailed either indirect consumer subsidies (via high prices and tariffs on imports) or direct subsidies from taxation. *Pauperist* regimes targeted 'deserving' categories of very poor people through highly targeted non-contributory social assistance.

Social assistance programmes were introduced in a number of places in the early and mid-twentieth century (most notably in South Africa (Seekings 2005, 2007a), parts of the Caribbean (Seekings 2007b), and in Mauritius (Willmore 2006; Seekings 2011)), but these cases were rarely emulated between the 1950s and 1980s. British-style social assistance was introduced in settings where colonial officials assessed that neither the agrarian nor the workerist models were feasible (the former due to a shortage of land for peasant agriculture, the latter because of the implications for production costs in export sectors). In the 1940s, however, the British Colonial Office formulated a new doctrine of development which emphasised the agrarian model, wherever possible, limiting 'welfare' to community-oriented social work and the possibility of workerist measures for formal sector workers (Seekings 2010; Cooper 1996; Lewis 2000). The British repudiation of social assistance outside of Britain itself was replicated by the post-war international agencies, with the consequence that social assistance rarely figured on the policy menu in the second half of the twentieth century. When interest re-emerged in the 1990s, the historical antecedents were generally long forgotten.

By the 1990s, the social, economic and political context across much of the South was no longer propitious for either the agrarian or workerist models. On the one hand, agrarian society exhibited a declining capacity to accommodate the poor. Across much of Africa, population growth has resulted in substantial deagrarianisation. In India, for the first time, per capita agricultural production fell, especially of pulses, and falling water tables and dried-up reservoirs devastated many rural villages. At the same time, populations of elderly dependents were growing. In some countries, especially in Southern and East Africa, higher rates of morbidity and mortality among working-age adults compounded dependency ratios. In many countries, fewer and fewer people were able and willing to support their kin.

On the other hand, trade liberalisation posed profound difficulties for contributory systems of social insurance. The costs of contributory schemes could no longer be passed onto consumers through tariff barriers and high domestic prices, and governments were reluctant to continue to subsidise them heavily from tax revenues. Globalisation also exposed developing countries to increased hazards of economic crisis and abrupt recession, as in East and South-east Asia in 1997/1998.

These social and economic changes contributed to, and combined with, the political transformation of democratisation. As the 'third wave' of democratisation swept across the South, people pressed for rights, not as peasants or as workers but as citizens. In this context, the 'pauperist' model was revived, not as a residual model with roots in colonial poor laws, but as a universal model of citizens' rights. As in Britain (and other parts of North-west Europe) in the early twentieth century, benefits which stigmatised were transformed into 'social citizenship'.

These new welfare regimes might therefore be considered as 'redistributive' in that they redistribute, generally from rich taxpayers (and sometimes from external donors) to poor citizens, on the basis of their rights. Their origins may lie in 'pauperist' programmes, but they have transcended these. They are clearly distinct from workerist programmes, which failed to deliver on the promise of universalism, instead limiting benefits to the non-poor.

Data collated by Weigand and Grosh (2008) indicates the scale of expenditure on social assistance relative to social insurance. Incomplete data on a total of 87 'developing' and 'transition' countries (including much of Eastern Europe and post-Soviet Central Asia) between 1996 and 2006 show mean total expenditure on social assistance of 1.9% of GDP, and median total expenditure of 1.4%. Across the South as a whole, average social insurance expenditure is slightly more than double average social assistance expenditure, but there are major regional variations. Africa – which is generally overlooked in typologies of welfare regimes – accounted for most of the countries spending the highest proportions of GDP on social assistance, with Mauritius, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Algeria, South Africa and Malawi accounting for six of the top 10 positions. Indeed, among the 14 African countries for which they have data, average social assistance expenditure exceeds average social insurance expenditure. In India, also, social assistance expenditure exceeds social insurance expenditure.

3. The politics of reform in Brazil

Brazil's famous *Bolsa Escola* programme originated in experiments in the mid-1990s in two municipalities: Brasilia, controlled by the Worker's Party (PT, in Portuguese), and Campinas, by the Social Democrats (PSDB). These experiments were emulated by some other municipal administrations, gathering attention and support. Just prior to the 1998 presidential elections, the federal government (headed by President Cardoso of the PSDB) committed federal funding for half of the cost of the programme in poorer municipalities. In 2001, in the run-up to the next presidential election, federal funding was expanded further. In 2003, newly-elected President Lula (of the PT) launched the *Bolsa Familia* programme, to integrate several hitherto fragmented social assistance programmes, including *Bolsa Escola*. By 2006 payments of up to US$40 per month were being paid to 11 million poor families, comprising 55 million poor people, at a total cost of about 0.3% of GDP. Partisan competition was crucial to the expansion of expenditure. At the federal level, competition between

Cardoso's centrist PSDB and Lula's PT drove increased expenditures and hence adoption of the scheme in many parts of the country which would not have done so without external funding (Melo 2008). As importantly, diffusion between municipalities in the late 1990s was driven by electoral competition. Although Sugiyama (2008a, 2008b) found that the diffusion of municipal experiments in pro-poor social assistance and health care was *not* affected by the overall intensity of electoral competition, Coêlho (2009) showed that electoral competition on the political left, between the PT and PSDB, was crucial.

Democratisation affected other aspects of the Brazilian welfare state also. In Brazil, as in South Africa, a rudimentary non-contributory old-age pension in rural areas preceded democratisation but programmes were broadened and expenditures increased after the transition. In 1991, Brazil introduced a new non-contributory rural pension (the *Previdencia Rural*), and subsequent reforms reduced the qualification age, increased benefits, and did away with restrictions. In urban areas, a new *Beneficio de Prestacao Continuada* (BPC) was introduced in 1993 to supplement the existing semi-contributory *Renda Mensual Vitalicia* (RMV); qualification for these urban schemes was more restricted than in rural areas, with strict means-tests and older qualification ages, whilst eligibility for the RMV required at least 12 months of contributions to social insurance. By the end of 2000, there were 4.6 million pensioners on the *Previdencia Rural* scheme and 0.7 million on the BPC and RMV; together, the three schemes therefore reached over 5 million pensioners, at a cost of about 1 percent of GDP – which was substantially more than was spent on the *Bolsa Familia*.

In other respects, democratic institutions impeded reform in Brazil. The federal government's ability to expand funding for social assistance has been constrained by its onerous commitments in subsidising social insurance. Dating back to the 1920s, Brazil's social insurance programmes are a prime example of corporatist welfare provision for politically powerful but non-poor groups. Following trade liberalisation, the federal government had to subsidise the social insurance system from tax revenues to the tune of about 5 percent of GDP. The Cardoso and Lula governments both tried to whittle away some of the privileges enjoyed by public and private sector workers, with only limited success (Brooks 2007; Hunter/Sugiyama 2009). Whilst Cardoso and Lula were able to circumvent governors and other state-level political intermediaries in developing *Bolsa Escola* and *Bolsa Familia* as programmes rather than vehicles for patronage (Melo 2008; Fenwick 2009), Cardoso was unable and Lula minimally able to erode the vested interests of state-level patrons in Congress with respect to social insurance.

4. The politics of reform in Korea

The East (and South-east) Asian region is widely regarded as a laggard in terms of welfare state building. Rather than building a 'protective' welfare state, East Asian countries invested in 'productive' activities – including primary education – whilst repressing rather than buying off the urban working-class (Holliday 2000; Haggard/Kaufman 2008; Rudra 2008). In (South) Korea, to take the best-documented case, the state only introduced welfare reforms to co-opt the armed forces and selected public employees. Very belatedly, minimal reforms, primarily around health insurance, were introduced for a wider range of private sector employees, in order to bolster state legitimacy (Kwon 1999). The Korean state was a developmental state, with an ideology of anti-communism and economic nationalism. It was quite explicitly not a welfare state. Poverty was addressed through equitable growth, and welfare was left to families and companies, in a modest version of the Japanese welfare state (White/Goodman 1998).

The first impetus to change for the Korean state arose from the slow process of democratisation. Pro-democracy demonstrations in the late 1980s prompted some constitutional reforms and modest changes to welfare policies. Both the incumbent and opposition parties promised the extension of social insurance in the 1987 elections. Since then, "welfare policy has been a major policy agenda in every presidential and congressional election" (Kim 2006: 76; see also Wong 2004). In 1989, the ruling party's candidate narrowly won the presidential election against a divided opposition. In 1995, the social insurance system was modestly reformed. An opposition candidate, the former dissident Kim Dae-jung, finally won a presidential election in December 1997 and assumed office in 1998 amidst financial crisis. In this initial decade of democratisation, both health insurance and old-age pensions were extended, although with limited risk-pooling or redistribution (Wong 2004), but unemployment insurance and social assistance lagged behind.

Further impetus came from the 1997/1998 financial crisis, which drove the Korean economy sharply into deep recession. Two major *chaebols* (i.e. massive corporate conglomerates) went into receivership, there was massive capital flight, and unemployment rose from 2 percent in 1996 to a peak of 8.6 percent in February 1999. Unemployment was very high among college graduates, who were deemed to pose a threat to social and political stability. The existing welfare system provided inadequate protection: only one-third of waged or salaried workers were covered by unemployment insurance (under the 1995 programme), and only 3 percent of the population received social assistance under the Public Assistance Programme. As a democratically elected president, and with his political background, Kim Dae-jung had more political space to manoeuvre than his predecessor, and succeeded in pushing a social accord through tripartite negotiations with business and labour. The government was also looking forward. As a government with a minority in the legislature and elections due in April 2000, it could not afford to neglect poor and unemployed voters.

The result was what Kim (2004: 153) calls "a major shift to a universal social security system". The crisis transformed popular perceptions of the appropriate role of the state. In response, Kim Dae-jung promised a "comprehensive social welfare system" (quoted in Kim, 2006: 81): "Now, all citizens, including those getting by with less than the minimum level of income, will be provided with institutional guarantees of education, medical care and other basic requirements of decent living. […] The medical insurance, unemployment insurance, national pension and industrial accident insurance systems will be beefed up so as to build a comprehensive system of social security under which all citizens can enjoy stable, secure lives" (quoted in Yang 2000: 248). He reformed unemployment insurance to expand access to benefits, launched a massive emergency public works programme (which employed, at its peak, 450,000 workers) and revised social assistance (tripling the number of beneficiaries of public assistance to 1.5 million, and raising benefits). In 2000/2001, as the crisis receded, the public works programme and existing social assistance programme were replaced by a new programme of social assistance, the Minimum Living Standard Guarantee. This new programme raised benefits and means-test thresholds and, for the first time, covered working-age adults as well as the young and elderly. The Kim Dae-jung government also reformed pensions. It rejected the proposal of its predecessor to privatise pensions (as in Chile), instead consolidating a single-pillar pension system and extending its coverage. The government also reformed health insurance. As Kwon (2005: 4) writes, the new programmes "recognised entitlement to benefits as a social right and raised the level of benefits according to the relative concept of poverty".

Democratisation lies at the heart of Korean welfare-state-building. As Wong (2004: 14) writes, "democratisation affects what policy ideas are debated, how social problems are defined, and how decisions are ultimately made". His conclusion applied more generally: "Among late democratizers, the institutionalization of political competition, and thus conditions of political uncertainty, compel newly democratic regimes to initiate some social policy reform, no matter how secure (or insecure) the regime may be at the time" (ibid.: 159). The process may, paradoxically, be strengthened by the weakness of left-wing political parties. Cross-class coalition-building is necessary, Wong argues, pointing to the fact that Korea's reforms accelerated when the trade union movement shifted from sectional demands to a commitment to a more class-blind notion of social citizenship (ibid.: 146-149).

5. The politics of reform in India

India provides perhaps the least likely context for welfare reforms. It is by far the poorest of the case-studies considered in this paper, with GDP per capita (taking purchasing power into account) in 2009 less than one-third of Brazil's and barely one-tenth of Korea's. India is home to approximately one quarter of the world's poor. The state has limited fiscal and administrative capacity, and the dominant parties are minimally programmatic. Moreover, since the 1980s successive national governments have deregulated the economy in (successful) pursuit of economic growth. Unsurprisingly, "rights to social security have often been concluded to be a luxury India cannot afford to generalise" (Harriss-White 2004b: 429). The 1999–2000 OASIS (Old Age Social and Income Security) inquiry noted that the joint family system was less and less able to cope with the growing number of elderly people, such that India was "inexorably moving towards […] a gigantic number of destitute elderly", but concluded that the financial challenge was far beyond the state's capacity. "Faced with such large numbers, it is apparent that the problem will have to be addressed through thrift and self-help" (OASIS 2003: 22).

As in Brazil, sub-national governments in India have considerable power and autonomy, and some of the regional governments introduced important reforms. Uttar Pradesh introduced non-contributory old-age pensions for the destitute elderly as early as 1957. Some other states much later introduced more ambitious schemes. Tamil Nadu introduced a package of social assistance measures in 1989, including pensions for old-age, widows and deserted wives, and the disabled, as well as survivor benefits and other grants. The state finance minister boldy described this as "a comprehensive safety net which will ensure that no person in Tamil Nadu suffers from want and deprivation" (Harriss-White 2004b: 436). The number of pensioners in Tamil Nadu rose from just under 400,000 in the first year of the scheme (1989) to over 600,000 in 1995 (ibid.). Tamil Nadu also pioneered a midday meal scheme for children, while Maharashtra introduced employment guarantee schemes that provided a minimum cash income to poor rural households during the agricultural off-season.

At the national level, the state provided considerable benefits to public employees, and social insurance also covered much of the small number of workers employed formally by private firms (Rudra 2008). It also subsidised food through the public distribution system or PDS, although the benefits typically accrued to farmers more than to poor consumers. Further reforms have been placed on the agenda. A Working Group on Social Security (part of a broader Economic Reforms Commission) proposed in 1984 a package of old-age pensions and survivor benefits (for the dependents of a deceased household head) that would cost 1% of GDP and less than 4% of central and state governments' combined revenues.

Only recently, however, has the national government embarked on dramatic reforms, as in Brazil replicating reforms that had been pioneered by sub-national governments. In 1995, it adopted a National Social Assistance Scheme, including old-age pensions, family benefits and maternity benefits. The number of pensioners rose from 3 million in 1995/1996 to over

6 million in 1999/2000. Central government funding is limited, although the states can and do top up central funding with their own revenues. A midday meal scheme (the nutritious meal scheme or NMS) was based on the Tamil Nadu model. In 2005, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was passed. This was the boldest pro-poor initiative ever adopted in India, with a prospective price tag of 1 percent of GDP. Introducing the Bill, Congress Party leader Sonia Gandhi insisted that "an economy growing at 7 percent per year, can and must find the resources […] to improve the lives of its millions of poor" (Chopra 2005). The scheme, named after Mahatma Gandhi, drew heavily on the Maharashtra precedent. It was introduced in selected trial districts in 2006, and nationally in 2008 (Drèze 2010). By 2007/2008, more than 30 million poor rural households – or one quarter of the poor rural population – was paid for an average of 43 days per year (almost all over the mean season from April to June).

In the early 1990s, Guhan (1994: 50f) estimated that total Indian expenditures on all social assistance schemes amounted to 1.5% of GDP, and suggested that "a target of 3 percent of GDP for such basic minimum social assistance appears to be reasonable and affordable". Jean Drèze, one of the architects of the 2005 National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, argued that spending 1% of GDP was hardly "an exorbitant price to pay to protect the bulk of the rural population from hunger, insecurity and unemployment" (Dhavse 2004).

The expansion of public commitments in India was driven in large part by the country's long-standing democratic institutions becoming much more competitive. Mobilisation by both lower-class and caste voters, mostly through regional parties, and by higher-caste Hindu nationalists through the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), sharpened partisan competition, pushing the long-dominant Congress Party to more programmatic, pro-poor interventions. The Congress Party committed itself to a national rural employment guarantee whilst in opposition in 2002, and the commitment was part of the 2004 National Common Minimum Programme of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) that was formed around the Congress Party for the 2004 *Lok Sabha* (parliamentary) elections. The UPA's electoral successes in 2004 and again in 2009 were based on strong support among lower or poorer castes and communities, and among voters who were sceptical that recent economic reforms had brought them benefits. As Suri (2004: 5405) notes, "parties which made liberal promises to take up welfare schemes for the poor, farmers, and marginalised groups to offset the reform hardships" tended to perform well in the election (see also Yadav 2004; Swamy 2010).

Electoral competition provided a major impetus to the rural employment guarantee, but civil society activism was also important. At each stage of the policy-making process, conservative groups sought to water down the proposals. Only sustained pressure from civil society, and support from Congress Party leader Sonia Gandhi, sustained the momentum of reform (Drèze 2010; Chopra 2011).

The introduction of national programmes is less transformative than it might seem. Of the Indian states, only Kerala and Gujarat provide pensions to non-destitute elderly. Nationally, the coverage of old-age pensions remains minimal, and local politicians and officials exercise considerable discretionary power allowing them to use welfare programmes to consolidate their patronage networks. The midday meal scheme in Tamil Nadu provided a midday meal for children – and also employed 100,000 people as cooks and helpers, with salaries absorbing the lion's share of the costs of the programme. As Harriss-White (2004a: 376) notes, the programme "has built a decentralized and entrenched set of 'bureaucratic' interests in its perpetuation". Farmers as well as the grain distributors working for the national public distribution system constitute powerful vested interests, rendering the system "politically rock-solid" (ibid.), whilst politicians clearly like schemes that create opportunities for massive patronage. At the local level, partisan politics in India tends to be dominated by local elites. The poor exercise much less power through electoral or other channels than their counterparts in Brazil and Korea (although this has begun to change with the establishment of elected village councils, or *panchayats*). Even the NREGA fuels local patronage politics. If more than a quarter of the funds invested in a government programme actually reaches the poor, then the programme is regarded as a great success.

Nonetheless, it would be wrong to dismiss India's welfare reforms as insignificant. As in Korea and Brazil, they reflect a slowly changing relationship between poor citizens and the state, with the state expected to deliver more benefits to the poor, who increasingly claim these benefits as citizens, not as clients. As a result, a range of political parties are campaigning on more programmatic grounds, and less on the basis of patronage (Price 2011).

6. Conclusion

The Brazilian and Indian cases show how sub-national reforms can serve as experiments. When they prove popular and effective, reforms may be replicated by other sub-national governments, or by the national government. Similarly, reforms that become established in a regional giant often diffuse later across national boundaries. Conditional cash transfers not only extended from Brasilia and Campinas to the whole of Brazil, but were also introduced across almost all of Latin America. In Southern Africa, also, some of South Africa's social assistance programmes have been replicated by its neighbours. South Africa's welfare state predates by 70 years the transition to democracy. Democratisation encouraged increased expenditures and wider coverage. In post-apartheid South Africa, non-contributory pensions for the elderly, together with grants for poor mothers and the disabled, mitigate poverty considerably. The South African case serves as a powerful image across the region, notwithstanding the ambivalence of political elites. Across much of Africa, political elites "exhibit a striking bias in favor of the economically active poor, who are considered 'deserving', and a fear, despite evidence to the contrary, that 'handouts' create 'dependency'" (Devereux/White 2010: 63). It would be expected that poverty-reducing cash transfers would primarily take the form of public works programmes, employing working adults, along the lines of India's NREGA. Yet, between 1996 and 2005, South African-style old-age pensions were introduced in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland.[3]

These Southern African cases also point to the importance of electoral competition. The prospect of sharpened electoral challenges pushed incumbent governments towards reform in both Botswana and Lesotho, whilst the Swazi reforms seem to have been in part a response to agitation from civil society (ibid.; Pelham 2007). But competitive elections are not always an incentive to programmatic reform, as the Zimbabwean case illustrates. Even when other countries in the region introduced old-age pensions, and did so in the face of strong electoral competition within Zimbabwe, the government did not introduce programmatic welfare reforms for the general population. Instead, it provided corporatist benefits to the powerful War Veterans' Association (Krieger 2005).

There are diverse pathways towards redistributive, pro-poor welfare reforms, in countries with GDP per capita as high as South Korea and as low as India. These case studies also reveal some common elements. In a more democratic setting, intensified competition for the votes of poor citizens provides strong incentives for political leaders to implement reforms, especially when there is a strong demand for programmatic reforms rather than more extensive patronage. Korea's President Kim, Brazil's President Cardoso and his challenger (and successor) Lula, and India's Congress Party all sought to use welfare reforms for electoral purposes. Democratisation alone is rarely sufficient, however. In all of these cases, electoral competition combined with non-particularistic militancy on the part of civil society. Even when political elites are ambivalent or even conservative, as in most of Africa, they might initiate reforms for political gain.

These case studies all entail pre-eminent cases of reform, however; there are many other cases where reforms have been limited or non-existent. The precise relationship between political change and social assistance requires further research. Existing studies – such as by Haggard and Kaufman (2008) – examine aggregate data on 'social security spending', without distinguishing between social insurance and social assistance. Unsurprisingly, given the pressures to reduce public subsidies to non-poor beneficiaries of social insurance, Haggard and Kaufman find an uneven relationship between democratisation and expenditure, with the former leading to permanent increases in the latter in some regions (Eastern Europe and East Asia) but not in Latin America. Careful measurement of social assistance spending specifically, and of the political, social and economic conditions that are likely to explain variation, will allow more precise specification of the relationships between these.

1 See, for example, the Third International Conference on Conditional Cash Transfers, Istanbul, 26-30.6.2006. http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/WBI/WBIPROGRAMS/SPLP/0,,contentMDK:20892674~pagePK:64156158~piPK:64152884~theSitePK:461654,00.html, 29.1.2012.

2 Their emphasis on declientelisation "is derived from our central premise that formally guaranteed rights to welfare and employment security, embodied in legitimated states and regulated labour markets, will always be superior to a clientelist, or even reciprocal, system of informal rights which deliver dependent rather than autonomous security" (Wood and Gough, 2006: 1698).

3 They were introduced in Namibia (then South-West Africa) under South African administration, prior to independence.

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Abstracts

The end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries have seen an unprecedented growth in social assistance in countries as diverse as Brazil and Mexico, Namibia and Botswana, South Korea, India and Nepal. The extension of cash transfers to the poor through non-contributory schemes represents a fundamental transformation in the role of the state relative to markets and communities (or kin). Until the end of the twentieth century, the predominant welfare regimes in the South were either 'workerist', based on social or private insurance linked to formal employment, or 'agrarian', with a 'safety-net' based in subsistence agriculture and the responsibilities of kin. The rise of 'redistributive' welfare regimes focussed on citizens, rather than on workers or peasants, results from a combination of social and economic changes, new ideas and ideologies, and the political changes associated especially with democratisation. Whilst neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition,

increased political competition for the votes of poor citizens is an especially important factor in the diverse pathways towards redistributive, pro-poor welfare regimes.

Am Ende des 20. und zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhundert nimmt die Bedeutung von Sozialhilfe in so unterschiedlichen Ländern wie Brasilien, Mexiko, Namibia, Botswana, Südkorea, Indien und Nepal zu. Die Zunahme von Geldzuwendungen für die Armen über nicht beitragsfinanzierte Modelle bedeutet eine fundamentale Veränderung der Rolle des Staates im Vergleich zu Märkten und Gemeinschaften (bzw. Familien). Bis zum Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts waren die vorherrschenden Wohlfahrtsregime im Süden entweder „lohnarbeitsbasiert", begründet auf einer Sozial- oder Privatversicherung für formell Beschäftigte, oder „agrarisch", mit einem „Sicherheitsnetz", das auf Subsistenzlandwirtschaft und den Verantwortlichkeiten innerhalb der Familie aufbaute. Das Aufkommen von „umverteilenden" Wohlfahrtsregimes, die auf StaatsbürgerInnen statt auf ArbeiterInnen oder BäuerInnen ausgerichtet sind, ist auf eine Kombination aus sozialem und ökonomischem Wandel, neuen Ideen und Ideologien sowie auf vor allem mit Demokratisierung verbundene politische Veränderungen zurückzuführen. Obwohl weder notwendige noch hinreichende Bedingung, ist der politische Wettbewerb um die Wählerstimmen armer BürgerInnen ein besonders wichtiger Faktor auf den verschiedenen Entwicklungspfaden hin zu umverteilenden „*pro-poor*"-Wohlfahrtsregimen.

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