Social Policies and the Welfare State in the Global South (19th – 20th Century)

Veranstalter: Delia González de Reufels / Teresa Huhle, Universität Bremen
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Both the historiography and the political science literature on social policies and the development of the Welfare State are increasingly focussing on world regions outside of Europe. To reach beyond the established narratives on European social policies, Bremen Latin American historians Delia González de Reufels and Teresa Huhle organized the conference „Social Policies and the Welfare State in the Global South (19th – 20th Century)", which took place at the University of Bremen from September 14th to 15th 2017. Organised in cooperation with the 'Research Centre on Inequality and Social Policy: SOCIUM', it brought together a wide range of researchers from various disciplines and countries. At the centre of all the presentations was the interest in the history of the development, diffusion, and impact of social policies from a transnational or global history perspective. In their introductory remarks, hosts González de Reufels and Huhle stressed the importance of the transfer of knowledge and ideas to the history of social policy diffusion. At the same time, they pointed to the entanglement of social policies, of initiatives of reform and development, and heightened the role of transnational discourses on modernity.

The first panel focussed on „Transnational Labour Policies", tracing the trajectory and impact of discourses, propaganda, and North-South exchanges about workers' rights in late 19th and early 20th century Latin America. Breaking the first ground, MANUEL BASTIAS SAAVEDRA (Frankfurt am Main/Bremen) outlined the evolution of positivist legal thought. Influential Spanish, Brazilian and Chilean lawyers such as Adolfo Posada, Augusto Viveiros, and Arturo Contreras drew on German lawyer Rudolf von Jhering's writings and concepts, bringing about a paradigm shift from natural to positive law in Latin American legal discourse in the 1890s. Thus, it was lawyers' struggle rather than that of organized workers, Bastias Saavedra argued, which redefined justice in 'social' terms and shaped the new constitutions which were ratified in the wake of the First World War. Taking the example of Juan Domingo Perón's government in Argentina, THOMAS MAIER (Bremen/London) then proceeded by examining how 'labour diplomacy' served to disseminate the vision of a „Tercera Posición" – a third position – on the national and international stage. Argentina's vanguard role in propagating and implementing labour policies, however, conflicted with the lack of political legitimation of Perón's authoritarian rule. Against this backdrop, Maier questioned the extent to which national propaganda and the close collaboration between state officials and labour activists were influential. Commentator RAINER DOMBOIS (Bremen), finally, highlighted the key role of legal experts and governments in the implementation of labour policies in Latin America, while stressing the importance of the labour movements. He pointed out that, from a historical point of view, regulating mechanisms, such as strikes and collective bargaining, were as decisive for the evolution of legal thought as the distinction between formal and informal labour.

The colonial and imperial legacies of societies in the Global South were at the centre of the panel on „Colonial and Imperial Social Policies" which addressed political dependence and unequal economic development in both the imperial centres and the colonies. Introducing the section, DANIEL NETHERY (Canberra) reassessed the late implementation of a comprehensive unemployment insurance in France in 1958. This delay, Nethery argued, was based on the availability of a cheap labour force from the close North African colonies. France managed to prevent scenarios of mass unemployment by regulating labour migration between the motherland and the colonies. Taking the example of the British Empire, Nethery also proposed that it was the periphery – rather than the metropole – which provided role models of innovative social policies. ANDREAS ECKERT's (Berlin) paper then demonstrated how colonialism and racism played out in labour and welfare policies in Sub-Saharan Africa. Given the eco-

nomic importance of coercive labour in the informal sector, unemployment was considered a negligible phenomenon even in the wake of decolonization after 1945. Racist thinking, Eckert argued in his paper, was inherent to welfare instruments which aimed at „detribalizing" African families beginning in the 1940s. At the international level, organizations such as the ILO reproduced the image of Africa as an unrestrained reservoir of human capital by pushing debates on poverty and over-population rather than on labour rights. In her comment, CARINA SCHMITT (Bremen) affirmed the contribution of imperial relations to the emergence of labour policy and welfare programmes, which has yet to be studied in depth. She especially pointed out how French colonial ideology was highly influential on the emergence of 'familiarism' as an important factor in welfare schemes in Sub-Saharan African countries.

The first conference day closed with a keynote by ANNE-EMANUELLE BIRN (Toronto) in which she presented examples of „alternative solidarities" that connected experts, activists, and policy makers from the Global South in their attempts to build „healthy societies" and influence social policies. Birn combined theoretical reflections with a historic analysis of three decisive moments: First, the highly influential travels of Latin American health reformers to the Soviet Union in the interwar years, second, the World Health Organization's „Health for All" of the 1970s which was used by members from the Global South to develop a holistic approach to health care and, finally, Cuban and Brazilian South-South health cooperation from the Cold War to the present.

Drawing on „International Organisations and Platforms", the conference's second day started with its third panel connecting national welfare models with questions and modes of international representation, promotion, and exchange. NINA SCHNEIDER (Köln) sketched out the historical development of child labour in Latin America. She argued that child labour did not become visible as a social problem before the advent of industrialization in the late 19th century. In fact, Latin American governments restricted child labour in the formal sector from the 1920s onwards, following the ILO convention of 1919. Still, child labour persisted because of ineffective law enforcement, demographic and economic factors. Rather than protecting children against exploitation, a considerable set of laws criminalized mostly impoverished, homeless and orphaned indigenous children who were thought of as being involved in petty crimes and prostitution. Following up on Schneider's presentation, TERESA HUHLE (Bremen) carefully assessed how social reform became an important tool for the domestic and international promotion of Uruguay as a role model of progress and modernity. Huhle analysed both promotional texts and images which were published in exhibition brochures and catalogues during the presidency of José Batlle y Ordoñez. The demonstration of solidarity with disenfranchised social groups, the advancement of secularization, and labour rights were central features of the mediatic representation of the Uruguayan state. PAULA LUCÍA AGUILAR's (Buenos Aires) presentation emphasized the increasing importance of social scientific research for the development of welfare policies in early 20th century Argentina. Mapping out the survey of the National Institute of Nutrition in 1936 and 1937, Aguilar demonstrated how social scientists sought to provide empirical data on the living conditions of the lower social strata in Buenos Aires. Information ranging from income to food market prices and eating habits were gathered. However, by choosing the nuclear family as an analytical unit, social research actively induced social structures rather than mapping them, opening spaces for public intervention in a hitherto private sphere. Wrapping up the presenters' main ideas, commentator DELIA GONZÁLEZ DE REUFELS (Bremen) stressed the crucial importance of children and families as economic factors and, consequently, as targets of state intervention and social policies. As to legal codes, she highlighted the relevance of the gendered division of labour. Furthermore, she pointed out that women became important allies of the state and were part of the process of gathering data in surveys and public services, which deserves more attention.

The last panel of the conference addressed

„Welfare, Development and Social Rights", examining how governments and private actors used International Organizations as platforms to provide aid and to promote social rights in so-called 'developing countries'. The panel also questioned and raised awareness of a narrative which considers Northern societies to be providers and Southern societies to be exclusively recipients of developmental aid. First, ANNA DERKSEN (Leiden) outlined the evolution of the disability rights discourse which was shaped by the academic and political exchange between Northern European states and countries in the Global South from the 1970s onwards. Debates on human rights triggered a 'holistic' concept of 'disability' in the early 1980s when Sweden and Norway in particular promoted 'Community-Based Rehabilitation' (CBR) as a new programmatic approach. It depended on the use of local knowledge and social structures and was accompanied by the de-centralisation of authorities and public institutions in Scandinavia. ANGELA VILLANI (Messina) then examined the exchange between Southern Europe and supranational aid-organizations and their influence on legislation after 1945. Her presentation focussed on Italy which allowed her to show how the Mediterranean country became a field of intervention for international aid before it was considered a role model of economic reconstruction and successful social policy development. Finally, JADWIGA PIEPER MOONEY (Tucson), illuminated the role of „expert cultures" in developing solidarity movements between countries in the Global South. Following the traces of Chilean physicians, who implemented aid-projects based on the principles of social medicine in Mozambique in the 1930s, she used an actor-centred perspective to analyse the transfer of knowledge within the southern hemisphere and stress the mutual influence of state and civil society in this process. Pieper Mooney challenged the umbrella term „Global South" which implies a variety of different political, socioeconomic, and cultural conditions of countries and societies involved. Commentator NORBERT FINZSCH (Köln) reaffirmed the link between domestic social policies, welfare programmes and inter-national development aid, given the key role of the United Nations and related organizations since the late 1940s. As to the North-South transfer of ideas, Finzsch highlighted the problematic impact of colonial and fascist legacies not only on the formation of the European post-war order, but also in the shaping of development programmes.

The conference concluded with CHRISTOPH CONRAD'S (Geneva) keynote on growth and ageing of the world population as a challenge for social policies in the near future. Conrad's paper convincingly traced the paradigm shift which was marked by crucial publications such as Ehrlich's *Population Bomb* (1968) and the UN-report *World Population Ageing 1950 – 2050* (2002) while academic discourse moved from the dangers of global over-population to the risks of an over-aged world population. By 2030, pension schemes will necessarily come under pressure, Conrad pointed out. However, higher life expectancy rates – along with healthy lifestyles and an increasing environmental consciousness – could induce a post-growth phase and a positive socioeconomic development in the long run. According to some demographers, African societies, which will provide the major human labour force in the world in the mid-21st century, will benefit most from this process.

In sum, the conference offered profound insights into the development of social policies and welfare programmes in the Global South. Special attention was paid to discourses dominated by experts, politicians, state officials and IOs. In methodological terms, the use of different archival material and the critical re-evaluation of normative texts proved to be especially fruitful, and it could be argued that a perspective which combines a top-down-approach with a bottom-up perspective at some point sheds additional light on the history of social policies. The presentations excelled at showing how ideas and models of social policies and public welfare were not only transferred north-to-south, but also vice versa from and between Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Over-arching themes of all the panels were the interest in labour, children's rights and health care which were focal points of national as well as international programmes.

How social policies intersect with the histories of women, children, and disenfranchised people in the Global South continues to be a highly important and intriguing topic.

Conference Overview:

Introduction
Delia González de Reufels (Universität Bremen), Teresa Huhle (Universität Bremen)

Panel 1 Transnational Labour Policies
Delia González de Reufels (Universität Bremen): Chair

Manuel Bastias Saavedra (Max Planck Institute for European Legal History, Frankfurt a.M./ Universität Bremen): Jehring and the Working Class: Law and Labour in Turn of the Century Latin America, 1890–1930
Thomas Maier (University College London/ Universität Bremen): The Worker's State and the International Agenda – Perón's „Nueva Argentina", Labour Diplomacy, and Counterdiscourses during the Early Cold War
Rainer Dombois (Universität Bremen): Comment

Panel 2 Colonial and Imperial Social Policies
Norbert Finzsch (Universität zu Köln): Chair

Daniel Nethery (Australian National University, Canberra): Imperial Legacies in the French Welfare State
Andreas Eckert (Humboldt Universität Berlin): From Poverty to Informality? Labour and the Social Question in Sub-Saharan Africa after 1945
Carina Schmitt (Universität Bremen): Comment

Keynote 1
Teresa Huhle (Universität Bremen): Introduction

Anne-Emanuelle Birn (University of Toronto): South-South Cooperation: Building Healthy Societies through Alternative Solidarities

Panel 3 International Organisations and Platforms
Norbert Finzsch (Universität zu Köln): Chair

Nina Schneider (Universität zu Köln): Latin American Child Labour Laws in Historical and Global Perspective
Teresa Huhle (Universität Bremen): Promoting the „Model Country": Uruguay's International Display of Public Assistance Policies in the Early Twentieth Century
Paula Lucía Aguilar (CONICET, Buenos Aires): Households, Food and Wages: The Hygienic-Economic Survey of the National Institute of Nutrition and the ILO
Delia González de Reufels (Universität Bremen): Comment

Panel 4 Welfare, Development and Social Rights
Teresa Huhle (Universität Bremen): Chair

Anna Derksen (Universiteit Leiden): The Struggle for Disability Rights in a Development Context: Entanglements and Exchanges between Scandinavia and the Global South in the 1980s
Angela Villani (Università degli Studi di Messina): From Southern Europe to Global South: Unicef Nation Building Strategy and the Spreading of Welfare Systems after WW2
Jadwiga Pieper Mooney (University of Arizona, Tucson): Chile, Mozambique, and Back: The Politics of Social Medicine from the Welfare State to Dictatorship
Norbert Finzsch (Universität zu Köln): Comment

Keynote 2
Delia González de Reufels (Universität Bremen): Introduction

Christoph Conrad (Université de Genève): 'Global Aging': Planetary Process – Transnational Discourse – National Responses

Concluding Remarks and Final Discussion
Delia González de Reufels (Universität Bremen), Teresa Huhle (Universität Bremen)

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