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Editorial – border crossings: global dynamics of social policies and problems*

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This special issue calls for a global perspective on the history of social policy. It suggests that, from the middle of the nineteenth century, diverse forms of connection brought new understandings of 'social problems' across local, regional, and national borders. New economic networks, the acceleration of communication and transportation, and the efflorescence of new groups within civil society, including various 'expert' organizations as well as social reform associations, facilitated the transfer of both social problems and solutions to those problems. As Emily Rosenberg and others have shown, 'flows' of various kinds became 'denser' during this period, and these currents were especially significant in shaping what were seen as social issues.[1] Some scholars have gone as far as tracing global convergence in social policy since the late nineteenth century. Many have linked this convergence to a universal process of modernization, while some have cited the power of international bodies in encouraging common standards. Others have claimed that the rise of the welfare state was a 'transnational event' that resulted from simultaneous discovery, on the one hand, and mutual observation, on the other.[2]

Following recent work in global history, we argue instead that ideas about social policy flowed at different speeds – both between points of contact and over time – and with different effects, between the middle of the nineteenth and the middle of the twentieth century.

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1 Emily Rosenberg, ed., 'Introduction', in Emily S. Rosenberg, ed., *A world connecting, 1870–1945*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2012, pp. 7, 24. See also Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Munich: C. H. Beck, 2009.

2 Peter Flora and Arnold J. Heidenheimer, *The development of welfare states in Europe and America*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1981; Andrew Abbott and Stanley DeViney, 'The welfare state as transnational event: evidence from sequences of policy adoption', *Social Science History*, 16, 2, 1992, pp. 245–74; Abram de Swaan, ed., *Social policy beyond borders: the social question in transnational perspective*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1994; Bob Deacon *et al.*, *Global social policy: international organizations and the future of welfare*, London: Sage, 1997.

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Not least, some ideas about social problems coursed more quickly and more freely than others. The contributions to this collection show how transfers in social policy resulted from a complex process of co-production. Local reformers appropriated some ideas from abroad and rejected others, often in an attempt to legitimate or de-legitimate a strategy for social reform at home, while international organizations or colonial administrations claimed that certain policies were better suited to certain regions, institutional settings, or cultures.[3] By invoking a global perspective, we aim to highlight the complexity of these border crossings. Above all, we seek to parse the *politics* behind them. On the one hand, assumptions about 'modernity', sometimes phrased in terms of levels of 'civilization' or 'development', shaped the course and impact of policy currents. On the other, concrete constraints, such as state structures and divergent varieties of capitalism, *and* the values upon which those constraints rested, informed whether and how policy ideas from abroad were transmitted.

This collection stems from the desire to bring transnational, international, and global history into conversation when investigating how social policies transfer across borders. This project first took shape at an international conference that was held at the University of Cambridge in 2008. We sought to build upon past research in the social sciences on the flow of ideas about social policy, which often focused on the straightforward diffusion, adoption, or rejection of foreign models.[4] While we aimed to know more about the mechanisms for policy learning, we also wished to see past the concrete level of connection. As Daniel Rodgers suggests in his perceptive contribution to this collection, a focus on 'communication, motion, and connectivity' seems to suggest 'a world made up only of choice'. Rather, we might also consider the 'homologies, creation stories, oppositional dyads, before-and-after vistas, metaphors, and narrative logics' that have informed border crossings. As he forcefully reminds us, the transfer of social policy has as often been the result of 'direct and indirect coercion'.[5] Against this backdrop, such creation stories were particularly powerful, especially between the middle of the nineteenth and the middle of the twentieth century. As Sandrine Kott notes in her rich work in this area, the erection of 'social states', in their various forms, often coincided with the forging of nation-states.[6] In the case of migrant workers, ethnic minorities, colonial 'subjects', and refugees, social policy often served to define who was within the bounds of a community – and thereby entitled to provisions – and who was not.[7] For new nation-states and late industrializers, adopting what was seen as a particular 'model' of social policy could also serve as a form of self-legitimation, denoting a country's status as 'modern' or 'civilized'. In this context, certain 'models' proved more attractive than others.

3 Rosenberg, 'Introduction', pp. 7–8; C. A. Bayly, *The birth of the modern world, 1780–1914: global connections and comparisons*, Abingdon: Blackwell, 2004; Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, 'World history in a global age', *American Historical Review*, 100, 4, 1995, pp. 1037–8, 1057. See also Frederick Cooper, 'What is the concept of globalization good for? An African historian's perspective', *African Affairs*, 100, 2001, pp. 189, 192.

4 For example: Richard Rose, ed., 'Lesson-drawing across nations', special issue of the *Journal of Public Policy* 11, 1, 1991; David P. Dolowitz and David Marsh, 'Learning from abroad: the role of policy transfer in contemporary policy-making', *Governance*, 13, 1, 2000, 5–23.

5 Daniel Rodgers, 'Bearing tales: networks and narratives in social policy transfer', in this issue, pp. 301–13.

6 Sandrine Kott, 'Gemeinschaft oder Solidarität: unterschiedliche Modelle der französischen und deutschen Sozialpolitik am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 22, 1996, pp. 311–13.

7 David Feldman, 'Migrants, immigrants and welfare from the old poor law to the welfare state', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 13, 2003, pp. 79–104.

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Recent research in international and transnational history has begun to shed much-needed light on these issues.[8] Following in the wake of path-breaking studies by Daniel Rodgers and others, we have come to know more about how municipal and national governments, academics, and social reform groups have communicated about social problems since the late nineteenth century.[9] Some of this work has concentrated on the emergence of, and conflicts within, the transnational networks that connected diverse groups focused on social reform.[10] Others have focused on international migration as a test for national welfare programmes.[11] The majority of these studies have centred, however, on international organizations, ranging from the League of Nations and its influential affiliate, the International Labour Organization, to the United Nations, as well as a host of smaller, more specialist bodies, such as Save the Children International.[12] Increasingly, research on connections in social policy and problems has begun to focus on the spread of particular models, especially within the context of the Cold War, and on connected responses to social problems with a global reach, ranging from overpopulation to smallpox.[13] We contend in this collection that a global perspective provides a useful analytical tool for conceptualizing these diverse forms of border crossing. It allows us to explore the wide variety of nodes for connection, but it also enables us to examine in new ways blockages, questions of periodization, and problems of conceptual translation. The pieces in this collection focus on three optics which we see as particularly meaningful for research in this area: space, institutions, and forms.

Focusing on the global dynamics of social politics offers new insights into connections across space and, by extension, time.[14] As shown in important work by Pierre-Yves Saunier, Charles van Onselen, and others, a global perspective allows greater reflection on social political connections between localities, ranging from sanitation policies to flows of capital

8 Christoph Conrad, ‘Social policy history after the transnational turn’, in Pauli Kettunen and Klaus Petersen, eds., *Beyond welfare state models: transnational historical perspectives on social policy*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011, pp. 218–40; Christoph Conrad, ‘Vorbemerkung’, and Madeleine Herren, ‘Sozialpolitik und die Historisierung des Transnationalen’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 32, 4, 2006, pp. 437–4 and pp. 541–59.

9 Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic crossings: social politics in a progressive age*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1998; James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain victory: social democracy and progressivism in European and American thought, 1870–1920*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986; E. P. Hennock, *British social reform and German precedents: the case of social insurance 1880–1914*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.

10 Davide Rodogno, Bernhard Struck, and Jakob Vogel, eds., *Shaping the transnational sphere, 1830–1950*, New York: Berghahn, forthcoming 2014.

11 Paul-André Rosental, ‘Migrations, souvraineté, droits sociaux: protéger et expulser les étrangers en Europe du XIXe siècle à nos jours’, *Annales*, 66, 2, 2011, pp. 335–73.

12 Gerry Rodgers *et al.*, *The ILO and the quest for social justice, 1919–2009*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 2009; Sandrine Kott and Joëlle Droux, eds., *Globalizing social rights: the International Labour Organization and beyond*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013; Emily Baughan, ‘Every citizen of the empire implored to Save the Children! Empire, internationalism and the Save the Children Fund in interwar Britain’, *Historical Research*, 86, 213, 2013, pp. 116–37.

13 Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the world: America’s vision for human rights*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005; Matthew Connelly, *Fatal misconception: the struggle to control world population*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008; Erez Manela, ‘A pox on your narrative: writing disease control into Cold War history’, *Diplomatic History*, 34, 2, 2010, pp. 299–323; Aiqun Hu and Patrick Manning, ‘The global social insurance movement since the 1880s’, *Journal of Global History*, 5, 1, 2010, pp. 125–48.

14 Antoinette Burton, ‘Not even remotely global? Method and scale in world history’, *History Workshop Journal*, 64, 1, 2007, pp. 323–8.

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and workers. It also reveals in new ways central nodes for social policy. For example, the 'global cities' Geneva and, perhaps to a lesser extent, Washington, DC, brought together a range of reformers from across the world for conferences and work at the International Labour Organization, the Red Cross, and the World Bank, as demonstrated in this collection by Rob Konkel, among other international bodies which promoted social welfare through various measures.[15] Not least, a global lens situates empire more clearly within transnational and international developments in social policy. As Frederick Cooper reminds us, 'empires are a particular kind of spatial system, boundary-crossing and also bounded ..., their structure emphasizes difference and hierarchy, yet they also constitute a single political unit, and hence a potential unit of moral discourse'.[16]

For example, for parts of the British empire a common ethos of liberalism appeared to unite a 'Greater Britain'.[17] As Edmund Rogers shows in his contribution to this collection, assumptions about British commonality – based on the English language, culture, and institutions – encouraged social reformers in the UK to espouse New Zealand's model of old age pensions. In the early 1900s, trade unionists, social reformers such as Sidney and Beatrice Webb, and a myriad of 'New Liberal' politicians looked to the former colony's pension law as a model, and it later provided the basis for Britain's own policy. Advocates of the Antipodean system saw that New Zealand's pensions were particularly attractive because New Zealand was a sort of 'brighter Britain'. Although culturally similar to the 'mother land', it lacked the problems associated with Britain's antiquated Poor Law. Alternative policy options, such as the Danish and German models for addressing old age poverty, lost out against such arguments.

Similarly, Ulrike Lindner's article on the transfer of maternal and infant health care policies to German East Africa and the British colonies of Nigeria, Tanganyika, and Kenya shows how policies that were created for working-class families living in Berlin, London, and elsewhere were transferred in a piecemeal fashion to colonial Africa. German efforts in the domain were restricted and ended with the collapse of the empire in 1918, when its East African colony became a British mandate. Britain never established a common imperial policy on infant and maternal health care, as local situations differed too greatly. Nonetheless, from the 1920s into the 1940s, Britain saw the rise of a common social ideal: the imperial baby. As Lindner argues, transferring policy outright proved impossible, given limited resources. In this context, educating mothers and families about child health seemed the best alternative, and one that could apply to African mothers just as well as it could to those in Canada or Britain. The narrative logic that underpinned the policy was predicated on class-based assumptions about gender that easily translated into understandings about racial difference: working-class mothers in Britain and white-settler colonies were

15 Charles van Onselen, *New Babylon, new Nineveh: everyday life on the Witwatersrand, 1886–1914*, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1982; Pierre-Yves Saunier, 'Introduction: global city, take 2: a view from urban history', in Pierre-Yves Saunier and Shane Ewen, eds., *Another global city: historical explorations into the transnational municipal moment, 1850–2000*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp. 1–18.

16 Cooper, 'What is the concept?', p. 201. See also Kevin Grant, Philippa Levine, and Frank Trentmann, 'Introduction', in Kevin Grant, Philippa Levine, and Frank Trentmann, eds., *Beyond sovereignty: Britain, empire and transnationalism, 1880–1950*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 2.

17 Duncan Bell, *The idea of Greater Britain: empire and the future of world order, 1860–1900*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007.

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encouraged to care for their children in particular ways, just as African mothers were educated at imperial baby weeks in urban Kenya, Tanganyika, and Nigeria. This phenomenon was not unique to Britain. The process of policy transfer, and the assumptions underpinning population policy, were similar in German East Africa, even if colonial administrators there emphasized prevention and regulation instead, echoing strategies of 'social control' employed in German cities at the *fin de siècle*.

A global perspective not only reveals new scales of connection, from the municipal to the imperial; it also sheds light on temporal assumptions about space. 'Metageographies' such as the fictional divides between the global 'North' and 'South', 'East' and 'West', and even continents reflected assumptions about modernity which shaped flows in social policy.[18] As Konkel demonstrates, yardsticks such as the World Bank's 'global poverty line' carved the globe into regions that had attained 'economic development' and vast terrains that were still 'developing'. These understandings of space were closely connected to the early history of anthropology, which espoused an evolutionary model of civilizational development, in which colonies were seen as pre-modern societies that would eventually venture from piety, feudalism, and slavery towards secular capitalism.[19] In this light, social policy was seen as an opportunity to 'civilize' colonies, not only combating 'alleged cultural problems' – such as polygamy, infanticide, and child marriage – but also guiding them towards economic productivity, as Lindner shows in her analysis of maternal and infant health policies in British and German colonial Africa.[20] The introduction of social programmes also aimed to encourage productivity in colonies and former colonies, as elsewhere, by affecting labour mobility and national economic development. For example, registration systems for entitlements encouraged workers to move away from family industries and subsistence farming and towards market engagement.[21]

Welfare could as often provide an opportunity for former colonies to appear civilized, perhaps by rejecting the ostensibly outdated practices of the imperial metropole. Edmund Rogers' article shows how contemporaries saw New Zealand's old age pensions system as uniquely appropriate for the 'New World'. Like other colonial settings, New Zealand seemed a 'laboratory of modernity', where novel social experiments could thrive against a blank backdrop.[22] The origins of the pension programme made the policy a controversial import to the 'Old World' of the imperial metropole, which led some reformers to espouse models from continental Europe instead. In other cases, the nexus of metropole and former colonies led to a distinctive pattern that contrasted seemingly authoritarian and progressive

18 Fernando Coronil, 'Beyond Occidentalism: toward non-imperial geohistorical categories', *Cultural Anthropology*, 11, 1, 1996, pp. 76–9; Martin W. Lewis and Kären E. Wigen, *The myth of continents: a critique of metageography*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997.

19 Kathleen Davis, *Periodization and sovereignty: how ideas of feudalism and secularization govern the politics of time*, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 2008; Johannes Fabian, *Time and the other: how anthropology makes its object*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

20 Ulrike Lindner, 'The transfer of European social policy concepts to tropical Africa, 1900–50: the example of maternal and child welfare', in this issue, pp. 208–31.

21 Keith Breckenridge and Simon Szreter, eds., *Registration and recognition: documenting the person in world history*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

22 Paul Rabinow, *French modern: norms and forms of the social environment*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1989, p. 317. For a similar case, see John Murphy, *A decent provision: Australian welfare policy, 1870 to 1949*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2011.

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welfare arrangements, as was the case over the twentieth century in Portugal and Spain, on the one hand, and Brazil and Argentina, on the other.[23]

As Sebastian Conrad and others have suggested, a global lens enables us to discern more clearly the direction and force of ideas, testing whether the 'West' acted as a central point of reference for those considering the course of history and what the future might bring.[24] As Tehyun Ma shows, social policy derived from the 'West' – and, specifically, China's allies Britain and the United States – appeared to offer a path towards China's own future. New Deal social programmes and the Beveridge Plan seemed potential models of the social democratic future to which Sun Yat-sen had aspired decades earlier. For Guomindang (GMD) officials, however, that social democratic future was not based simply on convergent experiences of industrialization and social change. Instead, social policy from the West was attractive to the many US-trained officials working at the Ministry of Social Affairs because of their 'overlapping professional, ideological, and political interests'.[25] Reformers within the Ministry saw that the war that had begun in 1937 could act as a catalyst for China to move further towards fulfilling this social agenda. Whether to appropriate Western programmes outright was, however, open to debate: state intervention in labour questions and other social issues seemed to contradict Confucian ideas about communal and familial care, which were based on kinship and interpersonal obligation.

Similarly, Tamotsu Nishizawa demonstrates how, for Japanese economists who lobbied for labour reforms in the 1920s, Britain and Germany offered a preferable version of the future to that embodied by the USSR. From the opening of Japan following the Meiji restoration in 1867, Britain and Germany had provided focal points for the course of Japanese modernization, and economists such as Fukuda Tokuzo saw that both offered strategies to address the social harms associated with it. However, as in China, reformers such as Fukuda saw that social programmes derived from abroad would need to be reconciled with Confucian understandings of community. Therefore, Japanese reformers provided the basis for the country's post-1945 welfare state by weaving together a combination of insights from the Cambridge economist Alfred Marshall, the German economist Lujo Brentano, and others. In doing so, they created a novel form of Japanese welfare economics which focused on 'relieving the suffering of the people'.[26]

A global perspective reveals how these ideas about social policy travelled through a variety of institutions, and how the significance of these points of contact varied from place to place and over time. Attending university abroad or embarking on study visits, for example, to tour factory welfare programmes, were the hallmarks of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Rogers shows how British social reformers travelled to New Zealand to investigate its social programmes. Similarly, Ma, Nishizawa, and Rodgers detail how sociologists, economists, and historians from China, Japan, and the United States

23 This point is the focus of recent research by Pedro Ramos Pinto.

24 Sebastian Conrad, 'Enlightenment in global history: a historiographical critique', *American Historical Review*, 117, 2012, pp. 999–1027.

25 Tehyun Ma, '"The common aim of the Allied Powers": social policy and international legitimacy in wartime China, 1940–47', in this issue, pp. 254–75.

26 Tamotsu Nishizawa, 'The economics of social reform across borders: Fukuda's welfare economic studies in international perspective', in this issue, pp. 232–53.

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studied in Germany and Britain before returning home to espouse social reforms inspired by what they had learned abroad.

The nineteenth century also saw the global rise of reform associations which acted as central clearing houses for information about social problems. For example, as Nishizawa shows, the Association for Social Policy in Germany provided the model for the Japanese Association for Social Policy that was founded in 1896. Transnational bodies such as the International Association for the Legal Protection of Workers began to flourish in Europe from the 1880s, and they hosted regular international conferences on social topics ranging from prison reform to sanitation. During this period, religious internationalism, in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, also encouraged global efforts to coordinate philanthropy and combat social problems.[27]

Only during the interwar period did formal international organizations become predominant in addressing social politics. The conclusion of the First World War resulted in the establishment of the League of Nations in 1919. The Treaty of Versailles that had ended the war called for 'social justice' as a means to prevent future calamity. Economic policy, international relations, and a broad understanding of social policy came together within the framework of the League in order to achieve this ambitious goal.[28] An important aspect of the pursuit of social justice was the creation of the League's mandates system to assist former colonies to achieve national autonomy. As Lindner shows in her contribution, the mandates system encouraged Britain to enact novel healthcare policies in Tanganyika, the former German East African colony. At the same time, the spirit of the mandates system informed Britain's treatment of its own colonies. Lindner demonstrates how British administrators partly introduced maternity and child health reforms in Nigeria and Kenya as a means to appear progressive amid a changing international climate, in which the legitimacy of colonial rule was increasingly under attack. A more important motivation was, however, growing fears about population decline in sub-Saharan Africa and its potential impact on 'colonial development' after the First World War. Infant and maternal health was not the primary focus of international organizations such as the Rockefeller and the League of Nations Health Organization, which instead concentrated on contagious diseases such as sleeping sickness, tuberculosis, and yellow fever during the interwar period. Britain's introduction of Jeanes schools, an import from the US that originally sought to foster development in rural African-American areas, maternity hospitals, and other provisions at this time therefore reflected a combination of influences. These included international organizations, social surveys such as Lord Hailey's *African Survey* of 1938, and long-standing concerns in metropolitan Britain (and Germany) about population health, especially among the working classes.

Like the mandates system, the International Labour Organization (ILO) sparked global efforts in social policy. Created in 1919 as an offshoot of the League of Nations, the ILO brought together employers, workers, and government ministers primarily to combat problems related to labour, including associated health risks as well as issues of trafficking and forced labour. It put forward numerous international conventions from the early 1920s,

27 Abigail Green and Vincent Viaene, eds., *Religious internationals in the modern world*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

28 Patricia Clavin, *Securing the world economy: the reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920–46*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013; Mark Mazower, *Governing the world: the history of an idea*, London: Penguin, 2012, chs. 5–6.

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encouraging factory safety, limited labour hours, and other measures, many of which filtered into reform efforts on the ground. As Ma notes, a branch of the ILO was established in Nanjing in 1930, and the GMD government consulted with its representatives when attempting to introduce factory reforms. Nonetheless, there was always a performative aspect to this international engagement. Participation in the ILO provided an opportunity for new states such as GMD China and Czechoslovakia, as well as colonies such as India, an opportunity to garner legitimacy by operating on an international stage while pursuing a shared, global social agenda.[29] From 1944, officials at the Chinese Ministry of Social Affairs worked together with the newly established United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and embraced the principles of the Atlantic Charter, in part as an attempt to legitimate China on the international stage. Exchange about social problems was not, however, merely a matter of performance. UNRRA, and its Chinese offshoot from 1947 (CNRRA), provided substantial aid, helping to address China's enormous difficulties related to demobilized soldiers and refugees.[30]

The role of international organizations in transferring ideas about and solutions to social problems was never apolitical, as Konkel confirms in his analysis of conceptions of poverty at the World Bank. Founded by the Allied Powers in 1944 as a means to re-establish order after the Second World War, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank) explicitly focused on economic development rather than what seemed a more contentious issue: poverty.[31] As a child of the early Cold War, it sought to distance itself from 'New Deal, Keynesian and government planning policies, all of which bore an all-too-close resemblance to socialism'.[32] In its first two decades, the Bank concentrated instead on the ostensibly neutral policy of 'economic growth' rather than a potentially radical programme of 'distribution'. It shifted focus from the 1960s, especially under the presidency of Robert McNamara, who espoused 'biological' metaphors that linked poverty to human need. Over the course of his tenure, from 1968 to 1981, Bank lending tripled. Nonetheless, the World Bank adhered to a focus on numbers and economics, which lent a pretence of objectivity and 'expert' credibility to its policies. The Bank's emphasis on political neutrality, and its reliance on 'trust in numbers',[33] would remain steadfast from its inception.

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29 Jeremy Seekings, 'The ILO and welfare reform in South Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1919–1950', in Jasmien van Daele *et al.*, eds., *ILO histories: essays on the International Labour Organization and its impact on the world during the twentieth century*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2010, pp. 152–3, 157, 167; Sandrine Kott, 'Constructing a European social model: the fight for social insurance in the interwar period', in *ibid.*, p. 183.

30 On this issue, see also Rana Mitter, 'Imperialism, transnationalism, and the reconstruction of post-war China: UNRRA in China, 1944–7', *Past & Present*, Supplement 8: 'Transnationalism and global contemporary history', 2013, pp. 51–69.

31 On this issue, see also John and Richard Toye, 'How the UN moved from full employment to economic development', *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 44, 1, 2006, pp. 13–31; Michele Alacevich: 'The World Bank's early reflections on development: a development institution or a bank?', *Review of Political Economy*, 21, 3, 2009, pp. 227–44; Michele Alacevich, 'The World Bank and the politics of productivity: the debate on economic growth, poverty, and living standards in the 1950s', *Journal of Global History*, 6, 1, 2011, pp. 53–74.

32 Rob Konkel, 'The monetization of global poverty: the concept of poverty in World Bank history, 1944–90', in this issue, pp. 276–300.

33 Theodore Porter, *Trust in numbers: the pursuit of objectivity in science and life*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996.

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It continued through the McNamara years, when the Bank began publishing its annual *World development report*, predominated following the rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s, and was cast in stone upon the creation of the 'global poverty line' in 1990. Numbers such as the Bank's indicators of economic growth appeared to translate easily, contributing to both metageographies of 'development' and the legitimacy of international organizations in solving social problems.

However, questions of translation, both literal and figurative, remained constant throughout these flows, influencing not only the interpretation but also the forms of social policy that travelled. As Ma and Nishizawa show, translating key texts such as Alfred Marshall's *Principles of economics*, which saw numerous editions in Japan from the 1890s, and the Beveridge Plan, which was greeted with a warm reception in China in 1944, remained a mainstay of social policy transfers from the nineteenth century onwards. However, translation was a selective process, and some aspects of Marshall's economic thought simply did not complete the journey to Japan. A global perspective on border crossings therefore sheds light on how some ideas became more influential than others, as was the case with the Beveridge Plan's rise to prominence. Beveridge's 1942 report on 'Social insurance and allied services' called for the creation of a universal system of 'social security' for Britain through the expansion of national insurance and the creation of a universal national health service. While the scheme proved particularly influential in the British Commonwealth, it resonated across the globe as well. For example, it was more significant than the ILO for post-war social reform in Scandinavia.[34] Not least, it continued to echo for years to come, as demonstrated by a recent French translation of the report, including a preface by François Hollande, who was embarking on his presidential campaign at the time of its publication.[35]

Yet the UK's new model was not the only major attraction in the years immediately following the Second World War. Cuba and China, as well as states across eastern Europe, were also inspired by social policy in the USSR. Nonetheless, the impact of the Soviet model was limited owing to the attraction of alternatives, as was the case in China, and because many of these states already had welfare systems in place, as in much of eastern Europe.[36] In part, however, the sea change in social thought after the Second World War was unrelated to either model. Social Catholicism also played an important role across western Europe during this period of welfare reform. While building on a tradition that went back to the nineteenth century, transnational links between post-war Christian democratic parties fostered a common vision for social welfare, as well as new strategies for international cooperation in the field.[37]

Some of these models of social policy seemed easier to adapt to local conditions. For example, labour legislation proved susceptible to transfer, as Ma and Nishizawa show, as

34 Pauli Kettunen and Klaus Petersen, 'Bringing comparison back in: transnational perspectives on the rise and fall of the Nordic welfare state model', unpublished paper presented at the ESPAnet conference, 18–20 September 2008, p. 23.

35 William Beveridge, *Le rapport Beveridge*, Paris: Librairie Académique Perrin, 2012.

36 Hu and Manning, 'Global', pp. 142–3; Tomasz Inglot, *Welfare states in east central Europe, 1919–2004,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

37 Wolfram Kaiser, *Christian democracy and the origins of European Union*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 95–9, 171–8, 307.

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European, American, and international efforts to improve factory safety and efficiency found resonance in industrializing China and Japan. By contrast, a related area, social insurance, perhaps saw the most difficulty in crossing borders – despite the widespread appeal of the Beveridge Plan after 1942. Some of the earliest transnational organizations and international congresses related to social problems, going back as far as the 1880s, focused on social insurance. Nonetheless, participants in those bodies, including social reformers, civil servants, and other keen observers, noted that the policy was not always suited to local economic and political conditions. As Edmund Rogers argues, observers in Britain were reluctant to take up a policy of non-contributory old age pensions because they saw that it might not suit a country with deeply rooted institutions for addressing old age poverty. Not least, they noted that social insurance would pose serious political problems because of its implications for progressive income taxation.

The debate about social insurance, which warrants further investigation, would escalate in the twentieth century, as a wider range of states, colonies, and former colonies became involved. In part, the discussion was exacerbated by the existence of the ILO from 1919, which favoured social insurance in its early years as the result of its European bias, but also owing to its tripartite structure, which incorporated employers, workers, and delegates from the state. Perhaps as a consequence, the main issue in the interwar period was whether 'sparsely populated' countries (in the parlance of the ILO and member states) would be able to afford *and* implement social insurance. The pragmatic difficulties associated with social insurance also deterred reformers on the ground from adopting the policy, as was the case in China during the 1930s and 1940s. As Ma shows, the GMD put forward a proposal on social insurance as early as 1928, but it was shelved owing to concerns about associated costs and the lack of administrative knowledge, including statistics that could be used to chart social risks.

Only during the Second World War, with the Atlantic Charter and the Philadelphia Declaration, did the emphasis begin to shift from social insurance to the broader categories of 'social security' and 'social assistance'.[38] However, the new, inclusive language around social provision masked tensions inherent within international efforts in welfare reform. For example, for some newly independent countries, ILO restrictions on labour seemed to run directly counter to economic development, turning assumptions about flows in social policy and 'civilizing processes' on their head. Similarly, as Konkel and others show, there was a division within the World Bank on the merits of *social* loans for water or housing, as against directly *productive* loans that aimed to foster economic development as a whole. Although the Bank loosened its criteria for loans in the 1960s, following the creation of its International Development Association, it changed tack by the 1980s, with a new focus on structural adjustment lending that placed conditionalities on loans and enforced austerity measures on borrowers.[39]

38 Seekings, 'ILO', pp. 149, 154–5, 159; Andreas Eckert, 'Exportschlager Wohlfahrtsstaat? Europäische Sozialstaatlichkeit und Kolonialismus in Afrika nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 32, 2006, p. 477.

39 Daniel Maul, *Human rights, development and decolonization: the International Labour Organization, 1940–70*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012; Michele Alacevich, *The political economy of the World Bank: the early years*, Palo Alto, CA, and Washington, DC: Stanford University Press and the World Bank, 2009.

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Perhaps the most significant setback for global transfers was not, however, pragmatic difficulties, but rather the issue of differing definitions and understandings of 'social problems'. It is in this area, in particular, that we envisage important future research. For example, defining what constituted 'labour' proved particularly difficult, militating against the easy transfer of welfare measures which targeted workers. In agricultural regions, family members often worked the land without being counted as 'workers' because they did not receive traditional wages. As a consequence, female labourers were frequently overlooked. Thus, while France attempted to rectify some of the problems associated with work in its 1952 code for Africa, defining 'labour' nonetheless proved difficult, just as it had half a century earlier when the German empire attempted to do the same.[40] Not least, delineating between just and forced labour was particularly problematic, especially in the light of long-standing traditions in certain regions, such as the *muitsai* system of domestic bond service that was widespread through Southeast Asia. International debate about the issue resonated loudly in the interwar period, and continued after the Second World War, because it sat against the backdrop of broader discussions about what constituted slavery and childhood.[41] It connected with debates in development economics about the need to shift labour from agriculture with 'unlimited supplies of labour', where marginal output was assumed to be minimal or even negative, into 'modern' cities and industry, so allowing an escape from a vicious circle of poverty – a policy that would create its own social problems.[42]

By observing border crossings through these three optics – space, institutions, and forms – we aim in this collection to pose new questions and foster further research on transfers in social policy. We would like to suggest that a focus on global dynamics reveals, above all, the ambiguity inherent in defining the 'social'. A hybrid realm between the public and the private, the 'social' and its associated problems and institutions implied a sphere that was both political and personal. Yet it was also marked by a 'limited geographical and temporal field'. In the period between the mid nineteenth and the mid twentieth century, this space increasingly came to be associated with the nation-state.[43] While certain programmes and problems appeared relevant in particular contexts, they seemed meaningless or impracticable in others. Moreover, as the contributions to this collection reveal, contemporaries differed enormously in their understandings of social problems and possible solutions, which blocked agreement within transnational networks and international organizations, and prevented the easy transfer of social policies from one location to another. Not least, understandings of the

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40 Eckert, 'Exportschlager Wohlfahrtsstaat?', p. 481; Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African society: the labor question in French and British Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996; Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisation and the nation in imperial Germany*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

41 Kevin Grant, 'Human rights and sovereign abolitions of slavery, *c.* 1885–1956', in Grant, Levine, and Trentmann, *Beyond sovereignty*, pp. 91–9; David M. Pomfret, '"Child slavery" in British and French Far-Eastern colonies 1880–1945', *Past & Present*, 201, 1, 2008, pp. 175–213; Suzanne Miers, *Slavery in the twentieth century: the evolution of a global pattern*, Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2006, pp. 156–60, 197–8, 220–32, 283–6, 320–6.

42 Particularly in the work of W. Arthur Lewis, 'Economic development with unlimited supplies of labour', *Manchester School*, 22, 2, 1954, pp. 139–91.

43 Gilles Deleuze, 'Introduction', in Jacques Donzelot, *The policing of families*, trans. Robert Hurley, London: Hutchison, 1979 (first published in French, 1977), p. ix; Nikolas Rose, 'The death of the social? Re-configuring the territory of government', *Economy and Society*, 25, 3, 1996, p. 329; Lutz Leisering, 'Nation state and welfare state: an intellectual and political history', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 13, 2, 2003, pp. 175–85.

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role of the state in addressing social problems differed dramatically across the globe, with profound implications not only for the suitability of policy transfers, but also for the possibility of international regulation. Nonetheless, social policies crossed borders frequently from the mid nineteenth century for a variety of reasons, from concrete pressures related to international migration and the influence of new regulatory bodies such as the World Bank, to the more inchoate emergence of shared understandings about 'social rights'. Throughout these complex processes, narratives of difference and competition, of 'backwardness' and 'modernity', ran alongside attempts at cooperation and mutual understanding.

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