
F L O O R

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, LAND POLICY, AND GLOBAL SOCIAL RIGHTS

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Diffusing Social Citizenship at the Margins?

The Spread of Social Pensions in the Global South

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Abstract

“Social” (non-contributory) pensions have mushroomed in low and middle income countries since the 1990s. Most studies of social pensions are qualitative case studies. This paper draws on a quantitative data base, which has been constructed in the FLOOR project and covers all social pensions in the global South (in 65 countries), to investigate the spread of social pensions and the causes and consequences of this spread. Theoretically, the paper draws on T.H. Marshall’s concept of social citizenship, and on John W. Meyer’s work on world society and global diffusion processes.

Assuming that social citizenship is not linked to a specific set of institutions, but allows for various realizations across time and space, I make a case for understanding social policy in development contexts in terms of social citizenship. I argue that social pensions and other non-contributory transfers, especially means-tested programs, can assume a fundamental rather than – as mostly assumed – residual role in the overall architecture of social security in a country, especially in contexts of highly informal labour markets and low social insurance coverage. Conceptualizing the right to a minimum income in old age in three dimensions – period of coverage, universality and benefit level – as a measure of social citizenship, fuzzy set methods are used to assess the degree to which different social pensions contribute to social citizenship. Combined with an analysis of the range or scale of social pensions in the overall pension system, I conclude that non-contributory transfers often play a fundamental role for social citizenship in development contexts. To explain the recent spread of social pensions, I use multivariate models (event history analysis), finding that the spread can be partially explained by domestic processes of socio-economic modernization familiar from Northern welfare state research, but that global social policy norms canvassed by international organizations also had an impact, confirming to assumptions by J. W. Meyer on modern statehood.

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I. Social pensions in the developing world

In late October 2013 German newspapers reported that almost half a million retirees were receiving benefits from the non-contributory “Grundsicherung im Alter” (“basic security in old age”)¹, a new peak since its introduction in 2003. The increasing demand for the means-tested social pension was unanimously interpreted as an indicator of increased poverty in old age and a crisis of the welfare state, whose contributory pension system lifts fewer and fewer people above the means-test threshold of social assistance.

In early November 2013 the German magazine “Development and Cooperation” funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development published an article by Charles Knox-Vydmanov of HelpAge International entitled “Pensions for all elderly people”. It discussed the spread of social pensions since the mid 1990s (see figure 1) as a significant step in the fight against poverty and towards the realization of the human right to social security in old age.

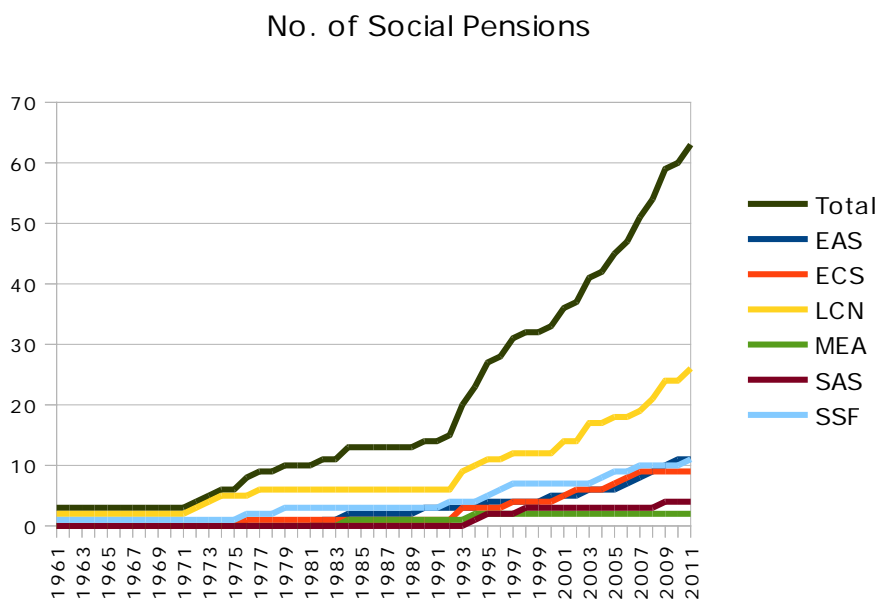


Figure 1: The rise of social pensions

Source: FLOORCASH Database – principal investigator: L. Leisering

Non-contributory pensions, which in a developed welfare state are decried for providing “equal but poor” (Myles 1984: 43) benefits constituting the “floor-level in the basement of the social edifice” (Marshall 1950: 33), have apparently become a global model. Not only has it spread across the developing world (Figure 1), it has also found advocates in the global policy community (von Gliszczynski 2013). Benefits that have been considered only insufficient realizations of social citizenship by scholars of the welfare state for a long time, are now gaining ground as “critical elements” (OHCHR 2010) in the realization of the human right to social security.

Are social pensions, normatively underpinned by human rights, becoming fundamental in realizing social citizenship in the global South?

¹ “Fast eine halbe Million Rentner müssen aufstocken” (FAZ, 23.10.2013), “Altersarmut in Deutschland steigt” (dradio.de, 22.10.2013)

International actors present social pensions as a realization of social human rights. While not conceived as such in the first place, social human rights have increasingly become connected with the core idea of the welfare state: “a political community that guarantees social participatory rights” (Kaufmann 2013: 37; Davy 2013). But scholars of social policy have rarely analyzed social policy in developing countries in the terms of the social citizenship rights they provide. Some claim that this “core idea of the welfare state” (Esping Andersen 1990: 21) bears less relevance in contexts where state autonomy is low and labor markets are not fully developed, some reduce social policy to redistribution. Understanding “social pensions as social policy”, as part II will argue, requires paying attention to *social rights*.

The marked spread of social pensions since the 1990s and their continued popularity during the last ten years alongside growing international advocacy, hints at the fact that conventional explanations of welfare state development, which focus on the functional requirements of modern societies (Wilensky 1975) or the democratic class struggle (Korpi 1983), may not be sufficient to explain the current wave of social pension adoption in the developing world. Diffusion processes (Dobbin/Simmons/Garrett 2007) have to be considered as another causal factor driving the extension of social pensions. Part III will briefly review the account for diffusion in welfare state research to shift attention to *world society* (Meyer et al. 1997). *Whether and when* developing countries have adopted social pensions may reflect global norms of proper state behavior. If the policy model of social pensions is framed as a realization of highly legitimate global norms such as human rights, states may adopt them not to solve functional requirements within their own society or because strong class coalitions demanded the inclusion of the excluded, but because they have successfully been conceived as a part of proper statehood: Because they have become a global model. Part III will test the assertion, that such global-level processes shape the adoption rate of countries in the global south, using event history models on newly created data on social pensions.

Whether the adoption of social pensions is accompanied by an extension of social rights is not answered by such an analysis of legislation adoption. To the contrary: Theorists of world-society would expect that the de-coupling (Meyer et al. 1997) of the adherence to global norms from local practice is widespread. The comparative analysis of social pensions undertaken in part IV thus fulfills two functions: 1) It assesses the social rights of social pensions and their salience in developing countries. 2) A lack of rights is not simply treated as an indicator of lacking political will or scarce economic resources, but further circumstantial evidence to support the assertion that social pensions have become a global model.

The two guiding questions of the thesis – What is driving the adoption of social pensions in the developing world? Does the spread of social pensions in the developing world institutionalize the right to a minimum income in old age? – nonetheless exhibit a certain tension: The former analyzes social pensions as a *uniform* policy model, which has become increasingly globalized; the second investigates *diversity* among countries. The final section will return to the question whether this tension between global models of collective responsibility and national realizations of social citizenship is constitutive for the ongoing diffusion of *the welfare state*.

II. Social pensions as social policy

1. Definitions

In this thesis the terms “non-contributory” and “social” pension are used interchangeably as it is usually done in the international policy community (for an analytical overview: von Gliszczynski 2013: p. 69-75; as an example: Knox-Vydmanov 2011²). These terms identify the basic concept of pensions that provide a minimum income to elderly without having ‘earned’ the entitlement by prior contributions. It is worth briefly elaborating the three aspects of the definition:

- **Elderly:** Entitlement is granted for a specific target group among the population, which is defined by an age, that is usually considered to coincide with the inability to earn a living on labor markets³. As opposed to general social assistance schemes, which target the whole population based on some criteria of need, only a categorically delineated group of people benefits from such schemes.
- **Non-contributory:** Entitlement is granted irrespective of prior contributions. This excludes “Minimum Pensions” (cf. Goedemé 2013: 109-10), which provide a minimum pension within the contributory systems by topping up earnings-related pensions to a predefined level, if a minimum contribution period is achieved and which are sometimes (cf. FIAP 2011: 3) labeled “non-contributory” as well.
- **Minimum Income:** Benefits provide a fixed amount of cash delivered regularly to the beneficiary (usually monthly). These benefits do not vary according to contribution record and are usually equal among all beneficiaries. In some rare cases benefit levels are graded by age groups.

Such pensions are by no means a recent invention, although labeling them “social” is (cf. von Gliszczynski 2013). They were first introduced only two years after the adoption of the first old age social insurance in Germany in 1891 in Denmark (Orloff 1993: 14), until recently formed the cornerstone of the Scandinavian welfare states’ pension system (and still do so in Denmark and the Netherlands), and are found in some form in most western welfare-states (Goedemé 2013: 109-11). Even their appearance in the international policy landscape is not recent. They were mentioned in the World Bank’s 1994 report ‘Averting the old age crisis’ as a “non-contributory” pillar and gained exposure in the years following the criticism of the World Bank’s original multi-pillar approach and are now featured prominently as the “Zero Pillar” (World Bank 2008) in the World Bank’s “Pension Systems and Reform Conceptual Framework” (cf. Wodsak 2011 for an overview over the changes in the pension reform strategies within the World Bank).

Following Goedemé (ibid.) one can further discriminate the different types of non-contributory pensions by their mechanism of assessing means (“means-test”) that they apply: While basic pensions are paid out to all citizens (other terms for this type of pension

² Another example can be found in the English Wikipedia, where social pension is defined as follows: “A social pension (also known as a non-contributory pension) is a regular cash transfer to older people.” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_pension; 22.07.2013)

³ Many non-contributory pensions are also granted to the disabled, widows and sometimes orphans. The analysis focuses on the pensions to the elderly, only referring to the other categories when they play an especially prominent role in a country’s set up of non-contributory pensions.

therefore include the terms ‘universal’ and ‘citizenship’⁴) regardless of means (income or otherwise), ‘Conditional basic pensions’ are dependent upon not being eligible for a contributory pension program, due to an insufficient contribution record (‘pension-tested’); Goedemé restricts the term social pensions to programs that are strictly means- or income-tested⁵. To minimize confusion this study applies the same logic as Goedemé’s, but always directly refers to the type of means-test (universal, pension-tested, means-tested) in its comparative investigation of non-contributory pensions⁶.

The three elements not only serve to clearly delineate the objects of this study from other types of pension programs or other social assistance schemes, they also show in how far their *function* differs from other types of income protection. While contributory programs, whether private or public, whether defined contribution or defined benefit, aim primarily at consumption smoothing over the life-course and include minimum pensions only as an ‘earned’ protective measure, non-contributory pensions provide a minimum income, and thus protection against poverty in the old-age, irrespective of prior achievements⁷. Only they *guarantee* a minimum income to older people (Goedemé 2013: 111). As opposed to the definition of minimum income protection put forward by Bahle et al. (2011: 13-15), which includes both, the means-test and the guarantee of a social minimum as defining characteristics, this definition does *not* require the means-test as a necessary element. Social pensions may be, and often are, means-tested and as such residual, but they don’t have to, to fit the definition underlying this study.

This definition excludes general social assistance programs, such as the German ‘Sozialhilfe’⁸, which existed until 1993, because social pensions condition entitlement by membership in a distinct population group. They do not protect the whole population against poverty, but only certain category within it. The decision to exclude these types of benefits from the study, even though they potentially benefit parts of the elderly population and institutionalize a minimum income guarantee for the elderly, possibly neglects parts of the “income package” (Ferrarini et al. 2013: 1254) available to the elderly population and may thus distort the extend of social rights in these countries. However opting for a “program-based approach” (Stephens/Danforth 2013: 1286) to social rights rather than a “risk-based” one, bears little practical relevance in the set of countries investigated in this study: In only a few countries – South Korea, Mauritius, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Armenia – a general social assistance scheme exists alongside a social pension. In no country does a general social assistance

⁴ HelpAge International calls them “Universal Social Pensions”, which adds to the terminological confusion.

⁵ Larry Willmore prefers yet another terminology calling the three types Universal Pensions, Universal Minimum Pensions and Social Assistance Pensions respectively:
<http://larrywillmore.net/blog/2012/04/22/universal-and-other-social-pensions/>

⁶ Even more confusion is added by the fact that some pension schemes’ ‘proper name’ included the phrase “social pension”, even though it would not classify as a social pension in Goedemé’s typology.

⁷ The World Bank publication “Closing the Coverage Gap” defines its object as “cash transfers [...] that aim to guarantee a minimum level of income during old age and to prevent poverty” (World Bank 2008: 2). The WB definition thus does include minimum pensions within contribution-based schemes.

⁸ The German ‘Sozialhilfe’ until 1993 can be said to embody the ideal-type of “modern social assistance” of a non-categorical, means-tested last safety-net, which aims at securing a minimum income (cf. Leisering 2010).

program exist *instead* of a categorical program⁹. Thus in the developing world the elderly are provided minimum income guarantees by categorical schemes rather than through a general last safety net. While this is also the case in many European countries (Bahle et al. 2011: 210, Goedemé 2013), it is striking that a minimum income guarantee for the elderly is institutionalized in absence of a general last safety net, indicating a segmentation of citizenship rights, which reflects public conceptions of desert (Bahle et al. 2011: 193-4) found in western welfare states (van Oorshot 2002; 2006) and also in global discourses on social policy (von Gliszczynski 2013: 159, 174).

Most of the literature on social pensions in the developing world has focused on their role in eliminating poverty (Barrientos/Lloyd-Sherlock 2002) or their contribution to “closing the coverage gap” (World Bank 2009). This literature is very much concerned with the practical issues of designing social pensions and fighting poverty and thus tries to assess the impacts of social pensions using case studies or simulations, which employ household survey data. This study chooses a different approach, which is situated in the tradition of sociological research on the welfare state and social policy. However, few attempts have been made to apply concepts from that research tradition in a comparative setting reaching beyond the OECD world.

2. Theoretical approaches to social policy: Expenditures, regimes and rights

Besides case studies informed by practical issues, research on social policy in the developing world has focused on comparative approaches, which “primarily aim[...] at system-level descriptions of multiple countries” (Esser et al. 2009: 95): These studies either focus on social expenditures (Haggard/Kaufmann 2008; Huber/Stephens 2012; Rudra 2002) or on types of welfare regimes (Gough/Wood 2004; Gough/Abu Sharkh 2010; Rudra 2007). The following section will first acknowledge the accomplishments of both approaches, because they represent the status quo in theoretically guided research on social policy in the developing world. By also highlighting their shortcomings the need for a middle-range alternative as proposed by Esser et al. (2009) will become apparent.

a) Expenditure-based approaches

Criticizing a purely expenditure-based approach towards social policy and the welfare state has become a mainstay in the sociology of the welfare state (cf. Scruggs/Allan 2008; Clasen/Siegel 2007). Nevertheless it is useful to reiterate a few main weaknesses of equating social policy with social expenditures, because it is easy to refrain to the scarce expenditure data when other data is even scarcer.

Two of the few comprehensive cross-national studies of welfare state development in the global South (Haggard/Kaufmann 2008; Huber/Stephens 2012) rely heavily on aggregate social expenditure as their dependent variable¹⁰. While spending data is widely used in comparative welfare state research, not least due to the fact that it is – or at least used to be –

⁹ “Income packaging” may play a role in households with children, because many countries feature programs, family allowances or conditional cash transfers, explicitly targeted at (families with) children.

¹⁰ These are complemented by comparative case studies. However the full set of countries is only included in terms of expenditure.

the most easily – or in case of the global South: only kind of – available data¹¹, criticism of its use has been a mainstay in the discipline as well since Esping-Andersen declared spending “epiphenomenal to the theoretical substance of the welfare state” (1990: 19) for empirical and conceptual reasons (cf. Scruggs/Allan 2008). He cites the example of Britain in the 1980s, where the Thatcher government cut benefits and expenditure increased due to high unemployment at the same time. It is possible to mitigate these problems by needs-adjusting, i.e. account for the size of the target population, expenditure figures¹² (Van Oorshort 2012), but these issues point towards the fundamental problem of expenditure data: What does it measure? At best it can be interpreted as a crude proxy for the overall welfare-effort of a country leaving open the decisive question of *who gets what*.

Haggard/Kaufmann (2008: 27) and Huber/Stephens (2012: 105) acknowledge this problem of expenditure data, but focus solely on the *redistributive effects* of social policies. Public social spending may act as a proxy of redistribution in welfare states in OECD countries (cf. Castles/Obinger 2007: 217-9), but this may not hold true in other parts of the world. This is due to the revenue side of social policies, which can not be expected to function similar to the developed countries. The “paradox of redistribution” (Korpi/Palme 1998) found in western welfare states leads to increased redistribution in welfare states, that target *less*, due to greater political support, hence bigger redistributive budgets, and the crowding out of private provision. Social policies, which are based on contributions or employment record, which are in itself less redistributive than targeted or universal transfers, achieve greater redistributive impact, because they affect the financing structures. This finding however does not hold true in contexts in which long term formal employment is the exception rather than the norm, e.g. Latin America. There social security expenditure is distributed even more unequally than income in many cases (Huber/Stephens 2012: 56), which reflects the fact that few are contributing to the programs. This, in addition to being tax-subsidized in an environment of proportional or regressive taxation, diminishes their redistributive effect: “Thus, one is on safe grounds in saying that at best, contributory social insurance will effect little redistribution and, in any case, cannot be expected to affect the high levels of redistribution that these systems do in some of the advanced capitalist democracies, most notably the Nordic countries.” (Huber/Stephens 2012: 57) As opposed to the paradox of redistribution, which prevailed in the heyday of the western welfare state, the economic interests of around 60-70% of the Latin American population would be best served with flat-rate or means-tested benefits (“targeted” or “basic security” models of social insurance in Korpi/Palme’s terms)¹³.

In terms of research strategy, this finding would necessitate a closer look at those social policies which are not based on contributions. The *decomposition* of social expenditure could be one way of mitigating this shortcoming of gross expenditure data. However Huber and Stephens do not systematically look at these policies and the spending associated with them. To counteract this shortcoming they model not only social policy expenditure but also inequality and poverty, to account for the uninformative nature of gross public expenditure, in

¹¹ A few studies utilize social spending data to analyze the OECD world and parts of the global South together (e.g. Rudra 2002).

¹² The comparative study in part 3 of this thesis will use this technique to estimate the welfare-effort spent on minimum income protection for the elderly.

¹³ Hence Huber/Stephens *politically* argue for a model of “basic universalism”, which encompasses a “guaranteed minimum income; basic free or subsidized health care and child care; and labor market training and primary and secondary education” (ibid: 72) as a feasible policy alternative for Latin American leftist movements.

their quantitative analysis.

But the redistributive impact is only one aspect of the decisive question *who gets what*. Social policies do not only redistribute resources across income groups or classes, but institutionalize *citizenship rights*. T.H. Marshall (1950: 59) emphasized that the redistributive effect of social policies should not be equated with their capability to provide social citizenship: “What matters is that there is a general enrichment of the concrete substance of civilised life, a general reduction of risk and insecurity, an equalisation between the more and the less fortunate at all levels [...]. Equalisation is not so much between classes as between individuals within a population which is now treated for this purpose as though it were one class.” Marshall referred primarily to the provision of social services, which Huber and Stephens agree have to be granted based on the flat-rate principle as a citizenship right to impede crowding out effects on the upper middle classes, but the same criteria holds true for the provision of a guaranteed minimum income in old age. Treating individuals vis-a-vis the state “as though it were on class” not only institutionalizes certain patterns of redistribution, but creates rights and duties of citizens vis-a-vis the state, thereby creating new categories within a population with differing (social) citizenship status. Social policies decide who gets what *social rights*¹⁴. If we follow Marshall’s specification of the welfare state as a state that provides social rights to its citizens, measuring social expenditure is surely inadequate to answer whether states grant what rights and to whom. With regard to social pensions this “institutional approach” (Nelson/Marx 2013: 11) shifts the focus towards processes of institutionalization of social rights for a large proportion of elderly, which were not covered under social insurance programs in the developing world.

b) Regime approaches

Another string of research (Wood/Gough 2004, Abu-Shark/Gough 2010) focuses on institutions, but questions the “nation-state centric” assumptions of the traditional welfare state research and broadens its focus from “welfare state regimes” to “welfare regimes” arguing that welfare states presuppose societal structures, which cannot be assumed in the global South: A legitimate, relatively autonomous state, ubiquitous labor and functioning financial markets. In shifting from welfare states to welfare regimes new components enter the welfare mix, which no longer consists of the state-market-family triad¹⁵, but includes intermediary actors and an increased influence of ‘the Global’ on all levels (Stubbs 2003). This increase in actors is accompanied by a decrease in their institutional differentiation: That a public sphere of politics is differentiated against markets, families or tribal-structures cannot be assumed in large parts of the world. Instead the political logic is often entwined with particularisms, rendering a universal notion of social citizenship improbable and welfare provision tied to ‘informal’ structures, such as trans-national remittances, or simply not existing¹⁶. While the diagnosis of lacking differentiation and the subordinate role of states in providing

¹⁴ These differences are referred to by Esping-Andersen (1990) when he discusses the welfare state as a “system of stratification” in its own right, and they are easily overlooked when social policy is thought of as merely a redistribution machine.

¹⁵ Welfare state research of course knows that few welfare state regimes relied exclusively on public benefits and services. There has always been a mix of public and private welfare provision and the construction of the “social sector” (Kaufmann) is one of the defining differences amongst welfare states.

¹⁶ Gough/Wood 2004 mainly focus on this aspect in their typology of welfare-regimes. They demarcate welfare-states from “informal security” and “insecurity regimes”.

welfare is certainly fitting for large parts of the world, shifting the focus away from the state as the primary subject and organizer of the social sector to the interplay of state, market, family and intermediary actors, also implies that the core concept of a regime approach as conceived by Gough/Wood is *welfare production* rather than *social policy*: “The very idea of social policy as a conscious countervailing force in Polanyi’s sense, whereby the public realm subjects and controls the private realm of collective welfare goals is thrown into question.” (Gough/Wood 2004: 31)

The renouncement of social policy as a central concept of welfare regime investigation also obscures an idea that Gough hints at very briefly and which echoes Esping-Andersen’s concept of the ‘stratification’ of social policy: “Different categories of a countries population can experience different primary regimes: some successfully incorporated into state protection, others reliant upon community and family arrangements and others more excluded from formal or informal arrangements [...]” (Gough/Wood 2004). Taken seriously, this raises the question how social policies shape the inclusion of different parts of the population into different regimes. Social pensions could then be analyzed as a social policy institution, which includes the elderly part of the population into state protection, or, in terms of citizenship, which elevates them to bearers of certain social rights.

However in their analysis this possible differentiation of welfare regimes is not accounted for. In a recent empirical study Gough and Abu Sharkh (2010) focus on institutional and outcome variables to verify the existence of meta-regime types via cluster analysis. This analysis by design rejects the idea that different parts of the population are subject to different welfare regimes. It measures the state’s part in the welfare mix by looking at public health and education expenditure as well as the share of social security contributions to government revenue¹⁷. Just as the above mention studies which focus on expenditure alone, it is doubtful whether these three measures represent more than a crude picture of the role of ‘public responsibility’ (Abu Sharkh/Gough 2010: 35) within the welfare mix at best.

An alternative approach to public responsibility is chosen by Rudra’s (2007) cluster analysis of “welfare states in developing countries”, which divides social policies in developing countries into commodifying and decommodifying ones, arguing that states in the global South are faced with a different situation at the end of the 20th century than the welfare-states-to-be were in the early 20th century. They are confronted with a pre-commodified labor-force (Rudra 2007: 383) and try to achieve either commodification or decommodification. These policies are seen as complementary to the development strategy chosen by the countries under investigation: While export-oriented countries tried to commodify its population through public health and education (the East-Asian countries being a prime example of such social policies, cf. Haggard/Kaufmann 2008), import-substituting economies, such as some Latin-American countries before the 1980s, try to engage in protective measures towards their labor-force, creating an elite of well protected blue and white collar workers in the urban centers. While Rudra’s analysis connects state responsibility and development strategy quite convincingly, its conception of social policy as a functional element of labor markets seems exaggerated in its juxtaposition of commodifying and decommodifying policies, especially considering he does not take into account who benefits from these policies. As Rudra asserts even “protective welfare states” in the developing world direct social rights

¹⁷ This is used due to the fact that comparable social expenditure data is not available for many countries in the world. Measuring the share of social security contributions as an indicator of a state’s income security measures is even more problematic, because social insurance’s role is marginal in settings where informal and rural labor are the norm.

to a narrow clientele (Rudra 2007: 384) and differ significantly from the social policies in the old-world, which – in different form and to a differing extent – realized social citizenship of large parts of the population. By considering all states that engage in social policies “welfare states” Rudra obscures the specific difference (Kaufmann 2013: 34-6) of a polity that institutionalizes the “collective responsibility for the well-being of the entire population” (ibid.). This specific difference and thus the degree by which welfare states can be separated from non-welfare states, is the “increasing guarantee of social rights”.

Existing studies of social policies in the developing world neglect this fundamental insight of welfare state research. Expenditure based measures of social policy ask about the extent of welfare effort of countries, focusing only on its distributive impacts. Regime typologies try to capture the structure and dynamics of welfare provision between states, markets, households and intermediary actors, but throw away a theoretically founded notion of social policy, or equate social policy with its (de-)commodifying effects in the context of development strategies.

An investigation of social rights in the developing world is obviously riddled with challenges. Data on social rights, which is easily available for many developed countries and a long time-span in form of the CWED and SCIP data sets, is lacking. Theoretical concepts and assumptions about core social rights and their causes might not “travel south”. To actually investigate the degree and form in which states take responsibility for their citizens by providing social rights it might be more useful to look at the presence of social policies in a specific policy field (Esser et al. 2009). Social pensions, which provide minimum income protection in old age, lend itself to such a “case study” of social rights in the developing world, because their role can be *fundamental rather than residual* in contexts of informal labor (see the next section) and they have increasingly spread across the developing world during the past decades (Figure 1).

3. Social rights: The fundamental nature of non-contributory benefits

The argument so far pointed out that looking at welfare regimes or social expenditure the question *who gets what social rights* is obscured by the bird’s-eye view these approaches take on social policy. However the kind of policy under investigation – social pensions – is janus-faced regarding the quality of social rights they may provide: *Can social pensions guarantee the right to a minimum income?* While universal programs are universally thought of as qualifying as social rights that contribute to social citizenship, especially if benefit levels are high enough (Esping-Andersen 1990: 22), means-tested programs are generally met with more skepticism regarding the quality of social rights they provide. Especially Esping-Andersen, by identifying social rights with their decommodifying effect, which means-tests curtail, has famously questioned the rights-quality of means-tested benefits, culminating in the apodictic assertion that social assistance schemes “do not properly extend citizen rights” (Esping-Anderson 1990: 48). However this identification of social citizenship with universal (and decommodifying) benefits or services can be questioned (Powell 2002). In its Marshallian conception social citizenship does not imply equality of outcome (i.e. income) and not even equality in provision, but consists in the mediation between the equal status of citizens vis-a-vis the national state, in which they are “full members of the community”, and the market-induced inequalities resulting from the transactions of unequally equipped private - “bourgeois” - actors¹⁸. And even though he described social class and citizenship as being “at war”

¹⁸ One of the first analysis of the tension is found in Marx’s writing “On the Jewish question”

(Marshall 1950: 31), Marshall knew that the modern inequalities of social class were contingent upon civil rights, such as the right to own property as well as the right to work (Marshall 1950: 15). It is their own effects, which paradoxically undermine the equality of status as citizens and at the same time presuppose it. Social rights ought to enable citizens to fully realize their civil and political rights, hence the three types of citizenship are not complementary but unitary in Marshall's conception. He excluded the poor law not because of its means-test, but because its provisions entailed the loss of the equal status as citizens. It did not mediate between the two principles – equal status as citizens and economic inequality, but replaced the equal status of citizens with the entitlement to social provision. His notion of a “modicum of economic welfare” does not prescribe specific institutions, with which it is to be achieved and even allows for different principles of provision, ranging from maximalist to minimalist (Powell 2002), to prevail in different areas of policy. In this way social citizenship regulates the degree of *legitimate inequality* (Marshall 1950: 9) in different spheres of modern society¹⁹. An ideal-typical set up could e.g. provide universal health care to every citizen based purely on the necessities of health provision, while pensions may be regulated by a minimalist principle, which put a floor beneath the free transactions of independent market actors, which follow their own logic and can as such not react towards the social consequences they cause.

Social citizenship allows for much more variation than is usually acknowledged by authors who restrict it to universal benefits and services²⁰. This “diversity of realisations across time and space” (Leisering/Barrientos 2013) allows policies other than the ones Marshall analyzed to contribute to social citizenship, but requires qualification when and how they do so. Leisering and Barrientos identify three key dimensions of Marshall's conception, which provide a yardstick to measure a policy's social citizenship provision: “[W]e put forward resources, participation and recognition – framed in terms of individualised legal rights – as three key dimensions of social citizenship” (Leisering/Barrientos 2013). *Recognition* rests on the equal status as citizens, which policies may bolster or undermine. In how far it is undermined by the means-test depends on the conditions imposed by it: Are they transparent and apply equally to all citizens? Is receiving the benefit connected to stigma or the loss of rights (as was the case under the old poor law)? Generally – our analysis will point at differences – means-tested social pensions do provide an individual right in the case of need. However, in a few cases need alone is not sufficient to qualify. Before massively expanding coverage the

(Marx 1975): “Political emancipation is the reduction of man, on the one hand, to a member of civil society, to an *egoistic, independent* individual, and, on the other hand, to a *citizen*, a juridical person”. It also underlies Franz-Xaver Kaufmann's sociological conception of social policy (Kaufmann 2012). In a global context the inequalities mediated by social citizenship need to encompass more than those produced by the (labor-)market, but include differences in livelihoods caused by a plethora of unequal social relations (cf. Tilly 1998).

¹⁹ Translating Marshall's thought into the terminology of a theory of societal differentiation (Luhmann 1977), the constitutive character of social citizenship for the functional differentiation of society becomes clear: Its provisions of “basic equality” stabilize the separation of functional subsystems, by prohibiting foreign logics (especially the economic) to creep into other subsystems. Civil, political and social rights individualize the person and manage its inclusion into the functionally differentiated spheres of society according to different principles.

²⁰ This egalitarian reading of Marshall is probably provoked by statements, which equate a full realization of social citizenship with a withering importance of social inequalities: “The advantages obtained by having a larger money income do not disappear, but they are confined to a limited area of consumption.” (Marshall 1950: 81)

Costa Rican social pension only covered 45% of the eligible population due to tight budgeting in 2003 (Huber/Stephens 2013: 176). The coverage rates of the massive Indian and Bangladeshi programs depend on budget constraints more than on the mere presence of need. Such restrictions seriously damage the quality of social rights by rendering them dependent upon budget capacity and discretionary treatment, which provokes clientelism, in deciding who of those that qualify should benefit. These two programs also lack heavily with regards to the *resources* they provide, both providing benefits well under the international poverty line of 38i\$ per month. Again the later analysis will show the differences in the *resource* dimension quite clearly. However many social pensions do provide a minimum income, i.e. benefits that lift the recipient out of poverty (cf. Marshall 1950: 54), while other non-contributory cash transfers in developing countries do not. Even Brazil's highly praised Bolsa Familia program does not lift families out of poverty and presupposes other means of welfare-production, which may be subsistence production or – more common in Brazil – other income sources: “While the BPC alone can almost always lift its recipients’ families out of poverty, the Bolsa Família families can escape extreme poverty only if they have income from other sources.” (Ferreira de Souza 2012) Social pensions outclass other anti-poverty transfers in the developing world in the resource dimension by a wide margin and as such provide a pertinent test case for an ambitious conception of minimum income protection.

The *participation* dimension of social pensions, which reflects the degree to which a policy shapes and strengthens the activities within civil and political life, will not be further analyzed, but one can expect that, given recognition and resources as individual rights, the participation of elderly within the society will change. Rebecca Calder (2012) cites a quite drastic piece of evidence linking the complete elimination of female genital mutilation to the SAGE social pension pilot in a Ugandan village. In this case traditional participation patterns of elderly in a community have been altered by the introduction of a social pension. Another effect that has been noted in some studies is, that the social pensions enables its recipient to take part in economic life by starting a small business²¹ (ILO 2010a: 19-23). Here – contrary to the image of retirement connected to the receipt of pensions in the developed northern countries, i.e. withdrawal from the labor force – a social right *enables* the realization of civil rights.

So while means-tested social pensions in itself do not disqualify them from being a social right, this initial investigation pointed towards the crucial dimensions, which will be further analyzed in our comparative study. In some cases social pensions may be found to only provide an “incomplete social right”, a status they share with social assistance in some western welfare-states.

In the western welfare states means-tested benefits have often been associated with a residual approach to social policy, which by focusing on the poor strengthens the market and creates a dualism in welfare provision: Those who can provide for themselves via the market (e.g. private pension plans) and only the poor become clients of the welfare state. And in fact social assistance remains “highly contested” (Leisering 2010) even in the developed welfare states, because neither liberals, who, perhaps somewhat ironically, decry it for creating dependency on state services, nor social-democrats, who favor universal benefits, which, as Esping-Andersen argues, provide more leverage against markets, are fond of this type of program. However not only those states primarily associated with liberalism (ideal-typically: the US) retained social assistance schemes, almost all welfare states feature one (or more) residual programs of considerable sizes, which provide minimum income protection when

²¹ Anecdotal evidence even points at the fact that social pensions render households preferred debtors of micro-finance institutions.

all other benefits are exhausted (for comparative studies see: Gough 1997, Bahle et. al. 2011, Nelson/Marx 2013). They thus are, as Bahle et. al. (2011: 2) emphasize, at the same time “residual and fundamental”. And the fundamental nature of the provision of a “social minimum, below which no one in society should be allowed to fall” (Bahle et. al. 2011: 13) is increasingly coming into the focus as the promise of “full employment” is deteriorating in western welfare states. The “margins of the welfare state” are put into focus²², because with the advent of “new social risks” (Esping-Andersen 1999) its core provides for fewer and fewer people, and “it is here that the limits – and thus the contents – of social citizenship are tested” (Leibfried 1993).

This fundamental nature of non-contributory, means-tested or universal, benefits is especially salient in developing countries. There labor has never been as completely commodified as the in the North and where the dependence on the ‘cash nexus’ did really replace all other forms of welfare production, the created labor markets did only absorb a fraction of the working-age population. Informal and vulnerable employment²³ is the norm rather than the exception for most of the labor force in the global South leaving them remote of any chance of participation in the established social insurance schemes. For a long time e.g. Latin American social policy was characterized by a dualism of quite well institutionalized Bismarckian social insurances for the core white and blue collar workers in the urban centers plus schemes for civil servants and no (income) protection at all for everybody else (Haggard/Kaufmann 2008, Huber/Stephens 2012: 76). Compared to the South-East Asian and Sub-Saharan African states, Latin American states did ‘massify’ the privilege of occupational social insurance during the ISI era, in some cases covering large parts of their population but still excluding those who did not participate in the formal labor market. This dualism in the provision of social rights became clear when the dismantling of import substituting industrialization (ISI) policies during the neo-liberal era pushed the labor force into the informal sector and led to pension privatization in many countries, resulting in a surge in inequality and poverty, which lasted till the late 1990s. In the mid 2000s only 36.6% of the active labor force paid into contributory pension programs (ILO 2010b). The countries of Sub-Saharan Africa never experienced an episode of increased formal labor and ‘successful’ commodification. According to ILO estimates around 80% of the labor force were in “vulnerable employment” since the 1980s and only marginal parts (ca. 10%) of the economically active population were in blue collar jobs. Even though social insurance schemes do exist in these countries (Kangas 2012), they are mostly restricted to civil service employees and an elite of white collar workers with only 5,4% of the population paying into pension schemes (ILO 2010b). Regarding informality and vulnerability of employment the situation looks similar in Asia. East Asia features an estimated 50% of vulnerable employment, South-East Asia 62% and South Asia 77,5% (ILO 2011). Naturally data on informality is harder to come by, but the available data shows that a majority of employment is informal in nature (83,5% in India, 63,2% in Indonesia, 68,2% in Vietnam), the informal sector makes up a significant por-

²² Which is also reflected at the EU level, see Marx/Nelson 2013 and Saraceno 2010.

²³ “Vulnerable Employment” is a category created by the ILO, which refers not to the informal economy, but to the type of labor relation. It is used because of better data availability and high coincidence with informal work arrangements: “Own-account workers and contributing family workers have a lower likelihood of having formal work arrangements, and are therefore more likely to lack elements associated with decent employment, such as adequate social security and a voice at work. The two statuses together, therefore, are summed to create a classification of ‘vulnerable employment’, now an indicator of the MDG employment target.” (<http://kilm.ilo.org/2011/download/kilm03EN.pdf>)

tion of the labor market and hence contribution rates to pension schemes are low (6,4% in India, 14,1% in Indonesia, 12,4% in Vietnam).

Even more so than the Latin American countries, in Africa and Asia social citizenship has been the privilege of a minority. Reaching “Beveridgean (i.e. universalistic) goals through Bismarckian (i.e. employment-based) means” (Huber/Stephens 2012: 24) was never feasible. The extent and adoption of social insurance legislation was rarely an indicator of the actual social rights provided to the population. In such circumstances non-contributory schemes, especially pensions, play a fundamental role in extending social rights, because they remain the only kind of income security²⁴ available to a majority of the population.

Summing up, social pensions *can* be a fundamental provider of social rights in the context of the developing world, if the criteria presented by Leisering and Barrientos (2013) are sufficiently met. Then, but only then, social pensions provide the social right to a minimum income, which is essential for extending social rights in contexts where social insurance does not institutionalize social rights for the uncovered majority. The presence of social pensions thus *may* indicate a significant extension of social rights in these countries, in any case it indicates an extension of coverage of transfer schemes. The analysis thus has to turn to the *adoption of social pensions* in the developing world and its causes as the *precondition of the extension of social rights*. So while the next section aims at *explaining* the recent surge in social pensions in the developing world, the final section *examines* the social pensions in terms of the rights they provide²⁵.

III. Social pensions as a global model

1. Diffusion mechanisms in the explanation of social rights

The study of the causes of the development of social rights has seen an increased explicit attention to diffusion processes in the recent years (e.g. Jahn 2006). The conventional range of explanatory models of welfare state development – modernization theories (e.g. Wilensky 1975), power-resources or class coalition theories (Korpi 1983, Esping-Andersen 1990) and institutional models (Huber et. al. 1993, Orloff 1993) – has been supplemented by an increased attention to international (or exogeneous) factors, contrasted to or interacting with domestic factors.

However research now goes beyond assessing the general effects of increased international competition (measured in trade, capital in-/outflows or foreign direct investment) on social security programs (e.g. Swank 2002) towards explicitly modelling the bilateral connec-

²⁴ During the last ten years other kinds of social cash transfers have also rapidly spread across the developing world. These transfers however are designed to *supplement* household resources not to guarantee a minimum income, which prevents extreme forms of poverty (Leisering/Barrientos 2013). Ferreira de Souza (2012) notes with regards to the famous conditional cash transfer “Bolsa Familia” in comparison to the non-contributory means-tested pension BPC: “While the BPC alone can almost always lift its recipients’ families out of poverty, the Bolsa Família families can escape extreme poverty only if they have income from other sources.”

²⁵ To reiterate: The extension of social rights, i.e. the institutionalization of a “social minimum”, is *not* identical to the adoption of social pensions. Only if the outlined criteria are met, adoption (or reform) of social pension legislation translates into an extension of social rights for the majority of the population. This analysis *separates* the causal account of social pension adoption (part II) from the comparative question to what degree social pensions increase the social rights of citizenship.

tions between countries using spatial lag models. Jahn et al. (2013) and Schmitt/Obinger (2012) have used such a research design to assess the impact of diffusion effects, now measured via spatial lags, which account for cultural, geographical and economic proximity²⁶, on welfare state generosity. Both find evidence for the effects of diffusion, and identify different mechanisms at work. Schmitt/Obinger identify positive diffusion effects within a “family of nations” used as a proxy for cultural proximity on pension generosity, which they interpret as a learning/emulation process. Unemployment and sickness insurance exhibit negative diffusion effects, which they interpret as “driven by competitive pressures” (Schmitt/Obinger 2012: 23). Analyzing unemployment insurance replacement rates Jahn et al. find similar evidence especially with regard to the Central and Eastern European states, which seem to be engaged in a “race to the bottom” driven by economic pressures.

While these studies highlight the impact of diffusion on national welfare states, the methodological account for Galton’s problem has two blind spots or rather underlying assumptions that need closer examination: They (1.) assume diffusion processes to operate (mostly) at the bilateral level, i.e. *between* countries (“horizontal diffusion”), and they (2.) assume the objects under study to be in fact welfare states, which are easily comparable in terms of the *social rights* they provide for specific risks. Both points require elaboration:

1. The recent advances in modelling diffusion among states rest on the assumption that diffusion processes, which transfer policies (or policy parameters such as wage replacement rates), take place between independent national states in a world which is not unlike that depicted by realist international relation scholars: stateless and hence anarchic. It is in this world where proximity in cultural, geographic or economic respects fosters or aggravates the different mechanisms of diffusion, resulting in the convergence or divergence in policies. Even when global developments such as “economic globalization” are analyzed, it is in terms of interdependence²⁷ of units not in terms of the emergence of a new level of sociality *sui generis*. However, even in face of the absence of a world *state*, many policies, including social (Deacon 1997, Leisering 2007), are increasingly shaped by forces in world *society*, which has to be analyzed as an organizational frame in its own right (Meyer et al. 1997; Boli/Thomas 1997): States are not only interdependent, but embedded in a “world society made up of rationalized cultural elements and associational organizations rather than a centralized bureaucratic state” (Meyer et al. 1997: 166). While scholars offer different conceptualizations of the global sphere of social life, they agree in its irreducible quality. Global organizations such as the World Bank or the International Labour Organization (ILO), to name the most important ones in the field of social policy, thus have to be taken seriously as causal factors in their own right, not only as intermediate epiphenomena in transactions between sovereign states. Whether diffusion processes take one form or the other is then an *empirical* question. In the case of pension privatization both mechanisms have been identified: The interdependence of actors in the form of learning in situations of uncertainty (Weyland 2005) and the influence of global actors, especially the World Bank (Orenstein 2005, Madrid 2003). However theorists

²⁶ These proximity measures are only loosely associated with the well known (Dobbin et al. 2007) diffusion mechanisms of emulation/learning, competition and coercion. The actual mechanism at work behind the diffusion process is often identified in an interpretive endeavor, which has little bearing on the operationalisation of the spatial lags.

²⁷ “Diffusion denotes a process in which the adoption of a certain policy in one or more countries leads to policy changes in other countries.” (Schmitt/Obinger 2012), “States are seldom independent from one another. They are interacting on political, social and economic levels.” (Jahn et al. 2013: 5)

following John W. Meyer would argue that the cultural construction of nationhood, including its “cultural content”, i.e. the goals and means of the modern state (Meyer et al. 1997: 152-3), is a prerequisite of diffusion processes *among* nation states, because these legitimate expectations institutionalized in the fabric of world society are the normative order on which all interdependence rests (cf. Stichweh 2000: 54-62; Strang/Meyer 1993; Meyer et al. 1997: 163; Meyer 2010). Only because the rationalized others in world society places uniform legitimate expectations on polities, being a sovereign national states being the most fundamental of them²⁸, states can observe and connect to each other as if they were fundamentally equal and comparable. Rather than being just forums of communication, which facilitate the connectedness among nation states, international organizations develop and institutionalize these taken-for-granted expectations of proper statehood²⁹. “Globalization as [e]xchange” can be distinguished from “[g]lobalization as [c]ultural and [i]nstitutional” (Meyer 2007).

Strang and Chang (1993) argue that the ILO, by laying down global standards, shapes the content of the welfare state³⁰. ILO conventions not only provide “skeleton legislation”, readily applicable global models, but “serve to symbolically move policies out of the realm of zero-sum, partisan politics and into the realm of fundamental, universally recognized rights” (Strang/Chang 1993: 242-3). Their study of the effect of the ratification of twenty ILO conventions that address “social welfare policy” on social expenditure in forty-five countries from 1960 to 1980, identifies this effect to be the strongest in developed countries, which lack the factors usually thought to account for welfare state development, while less developed countries do not exhibit the causal link indicating a “decoupling” between the adherence to international standards and enacted policy. Even though such a reaction to global norms, formal recognition on the world stage decoupled from national policy, is expected within an institutionalist world society theory framework (Meyer/Rowan 1977; Hafner-Burton et al. 2008), it raises the question of how far nation states implement the policies formulated by global actors *at all*.

2. The studies by Schmitt/Obinger and Jahn et al. take for granted that the states under research are in fact welfare states that do conform to global norms to a degree that allows scholars of the welfare state to compare them in terms of the social rights they provide and analyze diffusion between those states³¹. This may hold true for the usual set of developed democracies that these studies regularly analyze, but even though the presence of global norms has accompanied the rise of welfare states in the second half of the 20th century (Kaufmann 2012: Ch. 4), their effects have obviously been uneven. Analyzing the “welfare state as transnational event” (Abbott/DeViney 1992) in this sense, requires to pose the ques-

²⁸ Respecting and protecting Human Rights has become another fundamental expectation over the course of the 20th century (Beck/Drori/Meyer 2012, Meyer 2004, Elliott 2007).

²⁹ Following Hafner-Burton et al (2008) I use the term “legitimacy” to describe the mechanism at work, because it leaves the ontological status of nation states open, allowing constructivist or realist interpretations.

³⁰ Abu-Sharkh (2010) highlights the role the ILO plays in shaping labor-market relations by outlawing child labor in its convention 138 and how linkages to world society boost adoption. Hu/Manning (2010) provide ample qualitative evidence for the ILO’s influence on the global spread of social insurance.

³¹ J.W. Meyer and associates argue that social scientists in their endless comparative endeavours have contributed quite a bit to the rationalization of global models: “Similarly, diffusion among nation-states is heavily mediated by scientists and professionals who define virtuous instances, formulate models, and actively support their adoption.” (Meyer et al. 1997: 166)

tion *whether and when* such rights were introduced and how global and national forces were causally involved in their enactment. “The timing of social security adoption” was first analyzed by Collier and Messick (1975), who in their study found some evidence for diffusion in a universe of 59 countries by showing that later adopters introduced first social security legislation at lower levels of development than earlier ones indicating “hierarchical diffusion”. However they do find some support for the level of modernization being a necessary, but not sufficient condition of welfare state development, a finding later echoed by other scholars such as Hicks (1999: 35-7), who argues that the “trick is to treat development as a threshold” below which program adoption is unlikely to occur³². Analyzing not only the adoption of the *first* social security legislation, but sequencing of the five basic welfare programs – “worker’s compensation; sickness and maternity benefits; old-age, invalidity and death supports; family allowances; and unemployment insurance” (Abbott/DeViney 1992: 247)³³ – Abbott and DeViney see only limited evidence for diffusion between states, but “considerable evidence for a world-level process of policy adoption” (266) – at least in their sample of 18 developed countries. More recent studies utilizing event-history analysis report mixed evidence: Kim (2001) finds no evidence of world societal influences, operationalized as yearly dummies for participation in the annual ILO conference, on the adoption of old-age, sickness, maternity and unemployment insurance in 18 OECD countries. Usui (1994), using a much larger universe of 60 nations (the same as Collier/Messick 1975 + Ireland) and looking only at first social insurance legislation however does find support for both, domestic and world society, explanations.

Other studies in the *whether and when* tradition have focused explicitly on the global South and questioned the common perception that the East-Asian miracle was a product of the absence of income security schemes but rather accompanied by their steady extension (Hort/Kuhnle 2000) or tested “old theories in new surroundings” (Kangas 2012) reporting evidence for modernization and colonial heritage, a form of coercive isomorphism (DiMaggio/Powell 1983) and hence diffusion as one could argue, to play a major role in the adoption of work injury, sickness, pension and family allowance programs in post-colonial Africa, but neglecting the constant presence of international actors on the continent.

What can be made of this? The first legislation of social insurance in a country seems to be driven by diffusion processes operating at the world-level, especially in developing countries. Specific legislation could not – at least not using Kim’s (2001) operationalization – be proven to depend upon linkages to world society in OECD countries, but there’s evidence that the *sequencing* (Abbott/DeViney 1992) is related to processes on the world-level. Taken together these findings hint at the evolution of the cultural and normative content of welfare statehood *within* world society itself, the changing cultural content of collective responsibility (cf. Kaufmann 2013: 34-6) so to speak. Even though they are highly legitimized cultural models, conceptions of social policies are subject to change (Von Gliszczynski 2013). The identification of the diffusion of welfare states with the adoption of social insurance legislation is then only part of the story. As Kangas (2012: 76) points out there’s “strong European bias in

³² Hicks does not take diffusion effects into account in his study (1999) but focuses on the strength of working class organization. However his study is instructive in the way it treats early (i.e. before WWII) “program adoption and consolidation” as the dependent variable, which then shapes the further development of welfare states.

³³ Echoing the exact list of social security provisions the ILO lists in its “Convention concerning Minimum Standards of Social Security” (http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C102)

the selection of these four insurance forms as indicators of social policy". So on the one hand it cannot be assumed that the institutions of social insurance, even when they travel south, will add up to the familiar picture of welfare states, i.e. states that do grant social citizenship rights to significant parts of their population. On the other hand it cannot be assumed that these insurances will remain the central pillars of social human rights as enshrined in international conventions forever³⁴. The "fashions" (Meyer 2007: 263) of world society may change. How the highly abstract principle of the fulfilment of collective responsibility and progress through the realization of social human rights (Kaufmann 2013: 37) may be realized in practice is constantly debated and developed by rationalized others, which populate the organizational frame of world society.

This allows us to return to social pensions, which can be theorized to represent one element of the twofold development hinted at. They have been increasingly popular among governmental, such as the ILO, the World Bank, and non-governmental "rationalized others"³⁵ (Meyer et al. 1997) such as HelpAge International (Leutelt 2012, von Gliszczynski 2013: Ch. 4) and seemingly in parallel among nation states in the global South (for an overview see Leisering 2009). *What has caused this rise of social pension adoption in the developing world?* Following the discussion it can be theorized that changing global models of social protection have put pressure on national governments to adopt social pensions to conform to legitimate expectations of collective and as such *political* responsibility for individual rights (Meyer et al. 1997: 153).

By the end of 2011 over 65 independent countries in a universe of 139 independent developing nations had adopted a social pension. Figure 1 shows the increasing popularity of social pensions since the early 1990s. Especially the cumulative distribution of social pensions in Latin America show the S-shape typical for (horizontal) diffusion processes (Weyland 2005). Other regions show less distinctive patterns, hinting that different processes might be at work.

³⁴ To trace transformations of the content of "social rights" Davy (2013) analyzed 546 state party reports submitted under the framework of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) noting that the "content of human rights is constantly negotiated anew among relevant actors". States under the ICESCR "recognize the right of everyone to social security, including social insurance" (Art.9) and "the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living" (Art. 11). The reports showed a marked increase in the concern with poverty as a social problem (cf. Noël 2006) and cash transfers as a remedy since 1993, whereas before both rights were associated with collective welfare due to the influence of socialist and developmentalist thinking. This transformation echoes the general characteristic of social policy as the institutionalization of an *individualized* reaction to *social* risks (cf. Huf 1998) and Moyn's (2010) diagnosis of the rise of human rights as a reaction to the waning popularity of *collective* utopias such as socialism since the 1970s: While poverty and other forms of insecurity are now acknowledged as *socially* caused and thus *collective* problems – as opposed to individually caused and thus not worthy of collective responsibility (liberalism), they are classified as solvable through the granting of individual rights, as opposed to only abolishable together with their causes and thus requiring revolution (socialism).

³⁵ In the 2010 "Report of the independent expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty" to the UN Human Rights Council (OHCHR 2010) social pensions are explicitly linked to the realization of human rights: "States must recognize that social pensions are critical elements for the progressive realization of the right to social security for older people".

2. Data / Method

2.1. Data

To study the spread of social pensions in the developing world a newly assembled data base, which has been produced in the research project FLOOR-B “Social Cash Transfers – The Global Construction and Diffusion of the Right to a Monetary Minimum”, is used. Within the project data on all of the three big “dependent variables” (cf. Van Oorschot 2012) – social rights, expenditure and beneficiaries – of welfare state research were collected for a wide array of social cash transfer programs, i.e. non-contributory monetary transfers of different forms, in 139 developing nation states³⁶ and a few dependent territories such as Hong Kong. Of these 139 nation states 65 had adopted a social pension by the end of 2011 (for an overview see annex A).

2.2. Method & Dependent Variable

To investigate the factors that drive the adoption of social pensions, event-history (or: survival) models suit the task, because of their inherent notion of timing and risk, which underlies the research question (cf. Box-Steffensheimer/Jones 2004: 2-3). It has frequently been used in similar analysis of the adoption of social insurance laws (Usui 1994; Kangas 2012; Kim 2001), conditional cash transfers in Latin America (Sugiyama 2011), welfare state retrenchment (Hicks/Zorn 2005) and numerous studies interested in the effects of world society on convention ratification (Abu-Sharkh 2010; Wotipka/Ramirez 2008) and political change (Hannan/Carol 1981). Because the primary interest is in uncovering the influence of covariates on the hazard of adopting social pensions and not explicitly the influence of time itself (cf. Box-Steffensheimer 2004: 47), a Cox proportional hazard model is estimated, in which the hazard-rate, the rate at which units “fail” at time t conditional on their survival up to time t , is modeled as $h_i(t) = h_0(t)exp(\beta'x)$, where $\beta'x$ are covariates, which are estimated, while the baseline hazard h_0 is not estimated. *Proportional* hazards are assumed, so at any point in time the hazard ratio of two units must be constant, which implies that the effects of covariates must not change over time. Even though the analysis puts no emphasis on the influence of time itself, for the model specification it is essential to determine two things: When do the analyzed units, nation states, become at risk of adopting social pensions and what is the exact event, which causes them to exit the risk-set?

a) For reasons of data availability (most data on independent variables only goes back till to 1961) and theoretical considerations the “clock starts ticking” following the year 1966, which marks the signing year of the ICESCR and as can be argued a major step in the institutionalization of legitimate expectations regarding the collective responsibility of states within world society. Though it does not mark the first adoption of non-contributory pensions in the whole world and not even the global South, which would provide an alternative starting point of analysis, letting the clock start ticking following a world event seems appropriate given the focus on world-level processes. Countries that gained independence after 1966 enter the risk-set in the year they gain independence and are – counterfactually – treated as left-truncated. This delayed-entry specification is chosen to account for the fact that the baseline-

³⁶ A wide definition of “developing” was applied to assemble the universe of nations: Excluding all countries geographically classified as European and Northern American by the UN Statistics Division and countries with the 14 highest HDI (Human Development Index) scores.

hazard, while no *specific* form of time-dependency is assumed, is assumed to be conditional on the calendar year. It provides a conservative test of the hypothesis of world-level processes as captured by covariates, because the effect of (unobserved) global heterogeneity is absorbed by the baseline-hazard, which can be interpreted as the calendar year specific incidence function.

b) The event in question is thus defined as the national adoption of the *most recent* social pension since 1966. The study focuses on the most recent adoption or reform instead of the first legislation to accommodate for our interest in the factors that shape the *current* spread of non-contributory pensions, which are often more generous and encompassing than their historic ancestors. But reforms in existing social pensions are only regarded to amount to an adoption event, when the changes went beyond parametric reforms, such as a change in the benefit level or means-test, and included the introduction of a new policy instrument, often accompanied by the creation of new actors (cf. Hall 1993). For this reason the replacement of the old PASIS pension in Chile with the *Pensión Básica Solidaria* in 2008 does amount to an adoption event, while the parametric changes in the South African Old Age Grant since the beginning of the 1990s, which equalized conditions of access (cf. Leisering/Weible 2012), even though substantial, did not alter the policy instrument, which existed since 1928³⁷. Pilot projects, an increasingly popular instrument among policy makers, are only included when they are commissioned by the national governments. Sub-national, state-level or federal schemes are generally excluded, however schemes that apply geographical targeting are not, when applied as part of *national* social policy. Countries that inherited non-contributory pensions from colonial or other forms of being a non-autonomous polity are generally subject to the same criteria with the exception of the post Soviet republics, in which the introduction of national pension legislation after independence is treated as an adoption event³⁸. Because the study focuses on effects on adoption not implementation, the year a law was passed is used for analysis, regardless of the question whether it was only implemented later, such as the Brazilian BPC (1993 vs. 1996), or not at all, such as the zero-pillar of the 2001 pension reform in the Dominican Republic (Ondetti 2010: 50-1). Generally the date of adoption was selected rather conservatively and even though “[e]xhaustive historical research on social security development in the [...] countries considered here would doubtless raise questions about the appropriate identification” (Collier/Messick 1975: 1315) of the adoption event in some cases, the collected data provides a good overview over the adoption of non-contributory pension legislation in the developing world.

2.3. Hypothesis & Independent Variables

The study focuses on five main factors: Diffusion as measured “directly” through indicators of horizontal diffusion, linkages to world society – either through ratification of ILO core labour standards or ILO convention 102 “concerning Minimum Standards of Social Security” – and the regional commitment to global social norms. Effects of pension privatization may be interpreted as indirect effects of pension reform advocacy by the World Bank (Weyland 2005, Orenstein 2005, Madrid 2003, Müller/Mesa-Lago 2002). Hujo/Cook (2012: 26) assume that social pension adoption is prominently driven either by a “larger package of reforms of the existing pension system” (ibid.).

a) The influence of *horizontal diffusion*, i.e. the diffusion *between* states, is captured by the

³⁷ Appendix B provides an overview over the adoption years used in the models.

³⁸ In the models a separate post-soviet effect is accounted for using a dummy variable.

regional density of social pensions at $t-1$ (i.e. lagged one year). Six distinct regions also used by the World Bank and the Central Intelligence Agency are used: Sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia/Oceania, Eastern Europe/Central Asia, Latin America/Caribbean, Middle East/North Africa, South Asia. A similar indicator has been used with regard to convention adoption by Wotipka/Ramirez (2008).

b) *Linkages to world society* are usually measured using the number of memberships in international governmental organizations (IGOs) or international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) (Wotipka/Ramirez 2008, Abu-Sharkh 2010, Swiss 2012). Despite its popularity such a measure seems to imprecise to capture the more specific effect of *social norms* explicitly. Therefore the number of ILO core labour standards ratified over the last 10 years (including year t) is used. Strang/Chang (1993) use a similar indicator in their pooled time series analysis, however they only use conventions they deem relevant to social security provision. Since world polity theory assumes mechanisms to operate via a more general mechanism legitimacy producing mimesis, we chose ratification of core labor standards during the last 10 years as a variable to operationalize the intensity of *recent* efforts to conform to the established world models of modern statehood with regards to *social* issues. It is therefore assumed to operationalize the degree to which a country is part of the general process Bob Deacon dubbed “socialization of global politics” (Deacon 1997), which can be very clearly seen when plotting the average scores of this indicator over time (Fig. N). Von Gliszczynski (2013: 141) points out that the core labour standards also designate the first appearance of the concept of a “global social floor”, which was only later extended to include minimum guarantees in health and income security, culminating in the adoption of ILO recommendation No. 202 “concerning National Floors of Social Protection” in June 2012 (for its genesis see Deacon 2013). All in all the indicator adequately captures the extend to which a country – at least formally – accepts the notion of a “collective responsibility” for the well-being of its citizens³⁹.

c) A third measure of diffusion lies somewhere in between the aforementioned concepts. The influence of a *regional commitment to global social norms* is measured as the density of ICESCR ratifications at point t . Additionally whether or not a country has ratified the ICESCR at t is captured by a dummy variable⁴⁰.

d) Two types of events are included in the models to account for their potential influence on social pension adoption. In both cases the years since the event are transformed into a decay function ($\exp((0 - \text{years since the event})/X)$) to model the decreasing possibility of the event exercising influence on social pension adoption, X being the assumed ‘half-life’ of event influence. The first type of event, which relates to linkages to world society is the ratification of the ILO convention 102 “concerning Minimum Standards of Social Security” (its half-life being 2 years). The other event included is a privatization reform (data from Orenstein 2005, Weyland 2005) as heavily advocated by the World Bank in its 1994 report ‘Averting the Old Age Crisis’. The report did not only advertise reforming contributory pension programs into fully funded, privately managed, defined-contribution systems, but also argued for the introduction of a non-contributory pillar. Since pension reform and social pension adoption are assumed to coincide or follow closely a shorter ‘half-life’ of one year is used.

³⁹ Even though originally limited to their “rights at work”.

⁴⁰ Because no direct causal effect of ICESCR ratification(s) is assumed but ICESCR ratification thought to indicate the underlying process of commitment to global norms, the variables are *not* lagged.

The usual range of control variables is used to control the influence of alternative (exogeneous and domestic) explanations of welfare state development.

a) Following the *Logic of Industrialism* perspective, which assumes that processes of industrialization produce on the one hand new social risks, but at the same time provide, in form of greater affluence, means to mend them. This would suggest that higher levels of economic development along with greater needs in form of a bigger share of elderly⁴¹ drive the adoption of social pensions. To test this hypothesis – and related modernization theories – GDP per capita in constant 2005 dollars (logged to correct for its skewed distribution) as well as its growth rate, the share of population over 65 and the share living in rural areas⁴², are included in the models. Contrary to modernization theory, the influence of the population living in rural areas is expected to be positive, since agricultural working relations are often informal, increasing the need for non-contributory social security.

b) *Political theories* of welfare state development (for an overview see Myles/Quadagno 2002), emphasizing either working class strength (e.g. measured in union density) or strength of social-democratic parties, are harder to test in a global environment, because they assume the existence of democratic procedures of interest articulation and influence on the complexion of government, both of which may not be present in the developing world. To capture effects of *politics*, three variables measuring different aspects of democracy are constructed. One is the well known Polity IV index of auto-/democracy (Jagers, Gurr, Marshall 2012), which ranges from -10 (autocracy) to 10 (full democracy)⁴³. Democracy is assumed to positively relate to social pension adoption by allowing citizens to demand the realization of social rights via voting for parties that promise to do so, realizing social citizenship via the active use of political citizenship. Since there's little reason to believe that the effect of democracy is instantaneous, two other indicators are generated from the polity scores to allow for two opposing mechanisms of democracy to effect social pension adoption: The sum of democratic years (defined as years with a polity score equal or above 6; cf. Haggard/Kaufmann 2008: 72-8) within the last ten and another event indicator – as described above – to account for effects of recent democratization. The first assumes that articulation of interests within the public sphere does not always happen instantly but takes time for parties to form, elections to take place etc. (Huber/Stephens 2012: 105). The second highlights the role social policies have in processes of democratization and nation-building by assuming that democratization will be accompanied by the introduction of social policies as realizations of “reasonable relationships of reciprocity” (Kaufmann 2013: 32) within a national community. This sentiment is also present in Haggard/Kaufman's treatment of “critical realignments” in the “social contract” of a polity (2008: 45).

⁴¹ Orloff (1993: 46-50; 95) points out that many of these theories silently assume that the past “was very much like today”, in that elderly were automatically considered an economic burden: “Without widespread formal retirement, one cannot assume that all or even most, of the aged population constituted an economic burden to younger adults” (47). Wilensky's (1975) finding that the level of development mediated by social need as measured in the proportion of elderly, determines the development of the welfare states, assumes that the basic institutions of the welfare state, such as formal retirement via social insurances, are already in place.

⁴² The share of the labor force working in agriculture or industry, a popular index of modernization (Collier/Messick 1975) is not available for all country-years.

⁴³ A notorious criticism (Cheibub et al. 2010, Goertz 2006) of the Polity IV index is that its aggregated nature renders interpretation of model results difficult, if not impossible. However alternative measures such as the one constructed by Cheibub et al. did not provide data up to 2011.

c) However it has been theorized that this is less likely in circumstances of high *ethnic diversity*, where seemingly pre-modern social cleavages still play a large role in political life (cf. Gough/Wood 2004). This is captured using a time-invariant variable indicating the population share of the largest ethnic group (data from Fearon 2003).

d) One additional type of *international linkage* is explored. *Trade openness*, measured as imports plus exports as a share of GDP, is expected to either push for social policy expansion via “compensation” mechanisms or conversely cause retrenchment via mechanisms of “competition” (Hicks/Zorn 2005; Korpi/Palme 2003), both being plausible expectations for the adoption of social pensions.

Data for the control variables was mostly taken from the World Development Indicators published by the World Bank⁴⁴, additional data on country independence and democracy from Cheibub et al. (2010).

3. Analysis

The estimated models include only 101 countries, because of missing data mainly for some small states, for which Polity IV project does not collect data. Of these 101 states 45 experience the event during the period from 1967-2011, the total times at risk adding up to 3216. Thus the estimates are based upon 3216 country-years.

Five models were estimated. Model 1-4 differ in the operationalization of democracy used and the inclusion of the post-soviet dummy. Model 5 removes one of the modernization controls to highlight that the influence of these variables is no longer stable once one of the controls is removed⁴⁵.

While model 1, which includes all variables regarding our hypothesis and controls, does show the expected coefficients for the effects of democracy, development and the events hypothesized to have an effect on social pension adoption, Grambsch/Thernau tests (cf. Box-Steffensmeier/Jones 2004: 135-7) of Schoenfeld residuals, indicate that the proportional hazards assumption does not hold for two of our independent variables at a p-level of 0.01: The ICESCR ratification density and the lagged social pension density. The influence of both seems to be conditioned by time. To account for this violation of the proportional hazard assumption, the ICESCR variable is dropped from the following models and the social pension density interacted with the term *year>2001*, to account for the time-dependent effects of social pension density, which is assumed to affect social pension adoption only since the advent of ageing as a *social question* on the international agenda marked by the 2002 “Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA)” (cf. Leutelt 2012). Models 2-5 do not suffer from violations of the PH assumption, hinting at a world-level development which has spurred horizontal diffusion processes.

This is clearly seen in Model 2, in which the highly significant social pension density coefficient indicates that for every 1% increase in regional social pension density the hazard increases by 5%. Pension privatization and the ratification of convention 102 increase the hazard 13- resp. 20-fold. While the interpretation of the former is straightforward, showing that reforms of the contributory pillars increase the chance of non-contributory pension adoption, the latter is harder to interpret. Given the low median ratification time (1974) in our sample

⁴⁴ Accessed through the STATA module *wbopendata* (Avezedo 2011) on September 6th 2013; email the author for a copy of the data used.

⁴⁵ The often experienced instability of macro-quantitative models (and other problems of this type of research) is discussed by Kittel (2006).

and the decreasing rate of ratification (from 1987 till 2011 only 2 ratifications happened within our sample), one could argue that the increased hazard signifies efforts to become a social policy forerunner. However the 'attractiveness' of the convention 102 seems to have waned during the last 20 years⁴⁶.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Population share of largest ethnic group	1.806 (0.80)	1.690 (0.74)	1.137 (0.18)	1.209 (0.27)	1.645 (0.78)
GDP/capita (constant 2005 US\$ / logged)	1.822* (1.98)	1.801* (2.14)	1.644 (1.83)	1.972** (2.64)	1.115 (0.69)
GDP growth (%)	1.032 (1.18)	1.028 (1.05)	1.030 (1.14)	1.033 (1.31)	1.037* (2.30)
Population living in rural areas (% of total)	1.030 (1.90)	1.028 (1.90)	1.033* (2.34)	1.038** (2.94)	
Population aged 65 and above (% of total)	1.062 (1.02)	1.055 (0.87)	1.137* (2.27)	1.063 (0.89)	1.040 (0.63)
Trade (% of GDP)	0.999 (-0.16)	0.999 (-0.18)	1.001 (0.18)	0.999 (-0.22)	1.001 (0.15)
Polity IV	1.078* (2.48)	1.084** (2.74)			
Pension Privatization (event)	9.476** (3.19)	13.24*** (3.72)	11.03*** (3.48)	10.52** (3.24)	8.892** (3.20)
C102 Ratification (event)	16.43* (2.34)	20.72** (2.61)	25.44** (2.76)	19.50* (2.38)	17.32 (1.94)
ILO CLS Ratification (last 10 years)	1.254* (2.24)	1.299** (2.63)	1.328** (2.71)	1.201* (2.14)	1.221* (2.40)
ICESCR Ratification density (Regional)	1.002 (0.14)				
Social Pension density (Regional / Lagged)	1.038** (3.14)				
Social Pension density (Regional / Lagged / since 2002)		1.053*** (4.41)	1.050*** (4.29)	1.034** (2.91)	1.033** (2.93)
Democratic Years (last 10 years)			1.163*** (3.68)	1.219*** (4.15)	1.179*** (3.66)
Democratization (event)			2.656 (1.90)	3.249* (2.13)	3.432* (2.19)
Post-Soviet State (dummy)				6.472** (2.85)	4.439* (2.51)
NT	3216	3216	3216	3216	3216

Exponentiated coefficients; t statistics in parentheses; robust standard errors; adjusted for N=101 clusters; efron method used for ties.

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table 1: Model results of event history analysis

Source: FLOORCASH Database – principal investigator: L. Leisering

Model 3 and 4 apply the alternative operationalization of the democracy effects, separating

⁴⁶ This is also confirmed by estimating piecewise models dividing the data at 1990, which renders the covariate inestimable in the second piece.

effects of democratization and the democratic process. In contrast to model 3, model 4 includes a dummy variable indicating membership in the group of post-soviet republics, which – as already mentioned – share a common policy legacy of a comprehensive PAYG system with a non-contributory pillar. This increases the hazard of an adoption or reform of non-contributory pensions by almost 647%. Controlling for this policy legacy also reveals that both types of democracy effects are present. Newly democratized countries are more than thrice as likely to adopt a social pension than undemocratic states or older democracies, in which the hazard is driven up by the cumulative number of democratic years within the last ten (21% per year).

Controlling for the two opposing ways democracy can influence social pension adoption also offers a refined view on the factors usually proposed by modernization theory. While the significant coefficient of the elderly population indicator, which would suggest that the likelihood of adoption increases with social *need*, disappears when controlling for the post-soviet policy legacy and their relatively old populations, the two modernization indicators gain contradictory significance in model 4: Both, the level of economic development and the proportion of the rural population, have a *positive* influence on social pension adoption, which runs contrary to the assumption that a higher share of population living in rural areas indicates less development⁴⁷ and hence less need and capacity for the expansion of social provision. But this affirms our argument that the proportion of the rural population could be interpreted as a rough proxy of social *need* as well, because it coincides with higher informal working relations. It is notable that the effect is only significant when both control variables are included, on its own (e.g. model 5) neither reaches the required p-levels. Only when controlled for economic development the rural population increases the hazard of social pension introduction⁴⁸.

Summing up the adoption of social pensions seems to be driven by three major developments:

1. *Politics and Modernization* do matter in the developing world as well and do so in quite diverse ways: Social Pension adoption may be driven by the increased government participation of left parties or coalitions that support the extension of social security (Huber/Stephens 2012) or coincide with democratization itself. Economic development drives social pension adoption as well as a lack of industrialization. Taken together with the insight that the share of elderly itself does not increase the rate of adoption, the latter finding echoes the fact that in the developing world the household is “increasingly the unit of intervention as regards social protection and social assistance” (Leisering/Barrientos 2013). While being targeted at the elderly as an especially “vulnerable” category within the population, social pensions fulfill the needs of much larger segments of the population, for which no social protection is available.

2. *Reforms of existing pension systems* may provide incentives for policy makers to introduce social pensions. Two types of reform were identified as driving social pension adoption (and in some cases: reform): The overhaul of Soviet state pensions (cf. Falkingham/Vlachtoni 2010) and the recent wave of pension-privatization (Weyland 2005, Orenstein 2005). Both were shown to increase the adoption hazard of social pension adoption. A striking example of the latter case is Bolivia where pension privatization was linked with the introduction of the

⁴⁷ The correlation between rural population and employment in industry (as a share of total employment) is negative ($r=-.384$).

⁴⁸ When one of the two is removed the effect of current growth becomes significant.

universal social pension “Bonosol” (Müller 2008).

3. *Global developments* seem to be underlying both horizontal and world-level diffusion processes. The “socialization of global politics” (Deacon 1997) has increased legitimate expectations towards states to answer *social questions*. When the ILO adopted the “Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work” in 1998 these were still mostly framed as issues regarding the *labor contract*, but already envisioning a global social floor, which would later be supplemented with health provision and income maintenance. The degree to which a country accepts these *global norms* of ‘proper’ state behavior was shown to influence the adoption of social pensions. The time-dependent nature of the indicator of *horizontal diffusion* within world regions, hints at the fact that global changes cause countries to look beyond their borders for new policies⁴⁹. It was hypothesized that the global construction of poverty in old age as a social question as laid down by the “Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA)”, but other interpretations may be plausible.

Interactions between the three types of factors driving social pension adoption have been underexposed in the analysis. But the causal nexus between aging populations, pension reform, global developments (e.g. World Bank influence) and democracy seems to be rather demanding for quantitative methods.

4. Conclusion

The diffusion of social pensions in the developing world has indicated how national social policies are increasingly shaped by global processes. But do these processes facilitate the spread of social *rights*? As has been pointed out the rights quality of means-tested benefits has been doubted for a long time by scholars of the welfare state⁵⁰ and while, as has been argued in part I, there’s no a priori reason to exclude them, it depends on their conditions of eligibility, the level of benefits granted and the legal institutionalization whether or not these benefits really constitute a social right. Just as the adoption of international conventions has been largely “decoupled” from local practices (Meyer et al. 1997: 154-6), the reality of social pensions might look different than the promises made by international actors advocating for them: The Dominican Republic’s non-contributory pillar of the 2001 pension reform has not yet been implemented (Ondetti 2012), Kenya’s social pension is a pilot program that covers barely 3% of the population aged 65 and above, the massive Indian and Bangladeshi programs provide meagre benefits (9.5i\$/month and 7.35i\$/month) and even a country as developed in economic terms as Thailand keeps its social pension benefit below the international poverty line at just 28i\$/month. The diffusion of social pensions does not always indicate a significant increase in social rights. However as opposed to the diffusion of social insurances into contexts of barely existing formal labor markets, social pensions do address the context-specific issues of social security in the developing world. The next section will take a comparative look at the social pensions, which have spread across the developing world, to address *to what degree* the diffusion of the global model of social pensions really introduces the right to a social minimum in old age in developing countries.

⁴⁹ As Weyland (2005) argues local problems, e.g. of pension sustainability, might drive countries to look for solutions elsewhere as well. However the non-coverage of large parts of the population was not perceived as a social problem for the better part of the last century.

⁵⁰ At least since Richard Titmuss differentiated residual and institutional social policy (1975).

IV. Social pensions in comparative perspective

The following sections will first look at the institutional indicators, qualifying conditions and benefit generosity, of social pensions to assess the extent and organization of a right to a minimum income in old age in the developing world. The assertion that the fundamental nature of non-contributory benefits is emphasized in surroundings, which lack protective social insurance institutions, will be tentatively analyzed in a second part under the heading of the salience of social pensions. Two concluding analyses will synthesize the presented indicators: One to measure the presence of a right to a minimum income using fuzzy set methods, another to link this measure with the salience of social pensions in form of a cluster analysis. Throughout the analysis references to the presence and consequences of diffusion processes are intermingled to demonstrate that their effects go beyond the mere adoption of a policy as analyzed in section II.

The comparative analysis rests on the same data introduced in part II. Due to limited data availability, the data on qualifying conditions and benefit levels, were only collected for the most recent year available (see annex A). Time-series data was collected for beneficiaries and expenditures from 2001 till 2011, if available, but will only scarcely be analyzed in the following sections, because large gaps in the data remain. The analysis hence refers, unless explicitly stated, to the most recent year available. In the analysis of the social rights quality of social pensions the pilot projects in Indonesia, Peru, Paraguay, El Salvador, Kenya and Uganda will be treated as if they were national programs. One has to keep in mind that the social rights are not (yet) nationwide and as such, of course, not truly represent elements of social *citizenship*. Another caveat is that the program analyzed for the Dominican Republic is the old social pension “Programa Nonagenarios”, which was replaced by law with a new much more generous social pension coinciding with pension privatization in 2001. However this pension has yet to be implemented (Ondetti 2012) and the old program was still in place in 2007.

1. The social rights of social pensions

Scholars in the social rights tradition (Esping-Andersen 1990: 47-8; Palme 1990; Scruggs/Allan 2006) of welfare state research agree that two dimensions of income replacement programs are decisive in qualifying it as a social right: Conditions of eligibility and benefit generosity. The conditions of eligibility decide “*who gets what*”. The qualifying age defines who is considered *elderly*, the presence and extent of the means-test qualifies in to what degree a benefit is contingent upon *proven need*. Together they specify how the social *risk* of poverty in old age is transformed into an institutional answer. Benefit generosity determines the “*what*”: Whether or not the benefit guarantees a minimum income, which provides an “adequate standard of living” measured by societal standards. The analysis begins with the qualifying age and the extent and type of means-test before proceeding to benefit generosity.

1.1. Qualifying age

The age of eligibility for pensions in general has become a major element in the *structuration* of individual life-courses in modern society (cf. Leisering 2003). It marks the transition between the (adult) working life and the life phase of (old age) retirement and thus is an explic-

it element of “life course policy”⁵¹. Because social pensions are not dependent upon prior contributions, the qualifying age plays an even more prominent role than in contributory pensions, since they are only “life-course sensitive” (Leisering 2003: 217) in the very limited respect that eligibility is conditioned upon reaching this age instead of being dependent upon reaching a minimum amount of contribution years. However pensions only have the constitutive effect of the creation of a life-phase through institutionalization, when “pensions account for a major share of total income in old age, when they are widespread in the population, when there is a long period of retirement (longevity) and when they are rooted in a normative idea such as intergenerational solidarity” (Leisering 2003: 214). While it is not possible to explicitly check for the presence of these conditions⁵², the further discussion will return to the question whether or not the diffusion of social pensions does facilitate the institutionalization of the “old age” as a distinctively modern phase of the life-course throughout the world with regard to benefit levels, coverage and length of coverage. The elementary institutionalization of “old age” is done solely via the qualifying age by determining who is ‘old’.

While there’s considerable variation between countries and within regions, some notable patterns are visible in Table 2.

FM	EAS	ECS	LCN	MEA	SAS	SSF	Total
52 57				1			1
Row %				100			100
Col %				3,85			1,54
55 60	1			1			1
Row %	33,33			33,33		33,33	100
Col %	8,33			3,85		9,09	4,62
57 62			1				1
Row %			100				100
Col %			11,11				1,54
58 63			2				2
Row %			100				100
Col %			22,22				3,08
60 60	6			3	2	1	5
Row %	33,33			17,65	11,11	5,56	27,78
Col %	50			11,54	66,67	25	45,45
60 65			3				3
Row %			100				100
Col %			33,33				4,62
62 62				1			1
Row %				100			100
Col %				3,85			1,54
62 65						1	1

⁵¹ Leisering (2003: 211) poses old age pensions as one of three “core fields” of social policy as life-course policy.

⁵² These conditions are almost equivalent to the conditions determining whether or not social pensions provide rights that realize social citizenship. Marshall only hints at the fact that social policy is life-course policy, when emphasizing the “common experience” of social services. But the common experience goes beyond the usage of social services at different points in life, it is fostered by standardized life-courses structured through life-course policies such as pensions. Analyzing how social policies act as life-course policy emphasizes the temporal dimension of social citizenship.

Row %					100		100
Col %					25		1,54
62 67		1					1
Row %		100					100
Col %		11,11					1,54
63 63						1	1
Row %						100	100
Col %						9,09	1,54
65 65	2	2	11	1	1	3	20
Row %	10	10	55	5	5	15	100
Col %	16,67	22,22	42,31	33,33	25	27,27	30,77
65 67			1				1
Row %			100				100
Col %			3,85				1,54
65 70						1	1
Row %						100	100
Col %						9,09	1,54
67 67	1		1				2
Row %	50		50				100
Col %	8,33		3,85				3,08
70 70	1		5		1		7
Row %	14,29		71,43		14,29		100
Col %	8,33		19,23		25		10,77
77 77	1		1				2
Row %	50		50				100
Col %	8,33		3,85				3,08
90 90			1				1
Row %			100				100
Col %			3,85				1,54
Total	12	9	26	3	4	11	65
Row %	18,46	13,85	40	4,62	6,15	16,92	100

Table 2: Regional distribution of qualifying ages

Source: FLOORCASH Database – principal investigator: L. Leisering

The first and most obvious observation is that the countries in the global South follow the well known model of setting the pensionable age by “counting-by-fives” (OECD 2011; Turner 2007). Instead of being distributed normally or over a range of possible ages, 55-60-65-70 account for more than two-thirds of all qualifying ages⁵³. They also exhibit the trend towards gender equality in qualifying ages. Only a fifth of programs exhibit different qualifying ages for men and women⁵⁴. Where they do, the difference is once again five years in all but two cases.

These two findings are also expressed by the second notable pattern: The overwhelming popularity of the qualifying ages 60 and 65 (for both genders), which mark the beginning of

⁵³ HelpAge International’s “Pension Calculator”, which allows countries and activists to calculate the costs of implementing universal social pensions in a country provides only these four choices for “age eligibility” as well, hinting at the fact that “counting-by-fives” has become a global model in pension design.

⁵⁴ The South African Old Age Grant was equalized only recently after courts ruled the stratification of qualifying ages by gender unconstitutional (Weible/Leisering 2012).

old age in 26,15% and 30,77% of the countries respectively. However this pattern is differentiated by region: While a qualifying age of 60 is prominent in Sub-Saharan Africa (45,45% of the social pensions in that region) and East-Asia (50%), countries in Latin America predominantly condition eligibility upon reaching age 65 (42,31%).

On the one hand the popularity of “counting-by-fives” hints at mimetic diffusion being exercised by countries to deal with the complexities of setting qualifying ages for non-contributory pensions (cf. Turner 2007), on the other hand the distribution of qualifying ages across regions may indicate that within world regions countries adapt the qualifying ages to fit national circumstances, especially regarding the age-structure and life expectancies. However correlations of the share of population 65 and older, life-expectancy at birth and at age 60 and the qualifying age show only a weak relation. This might indicate that regional processes of mimetic isomorphism (cf. DiMaggio/Powell 1983) are driving the preference for a specific qualifying age as well, as opposed to being a purely domestic reaction to uncertainties in policy making.

This also has direct bearing on the social rights that are provided by social pensions and its impact on life-courses. High ages of eligibility in circumstances of low life expectancy lower the number of years an individual can receive a minimum income and thus establish old-age as a life-phase in its own right. To assess this aspect of the social right to a minimum income provided by social pensions, the rest of life coverage in years for somebody aged 60 was estimated using life expectancy data from the UN population division⁵⁵. This score relies on the counter-factual assumption that qualifying ages remain fixed at their respective levels⁵⁶. By using the life expectancy at age 60 the *current* coverage in years is expressed, to adjust for differing life expectancies as well as qualifying ages values are calculated separately for males and females. Table 3 shows the qualifying ages, life expectancies and years of coverage for all countries the UN population division provided data for.

Region	Country	Year	Qualifying age		Life expectancy at age 60		Years Covered by social pension			
			(f)	(m)	(f)	(m)	(f)	Rank	(m)	Rank
	BRN	2011	60	60	22,70	20,12	22,70	2	20,12	1
	CHN	2011	60	60	20,56	18,40	20,56	11	18,40	8
	IDN	2010	70	70	18,43	16,35	8,43	60	6,35	59
	KIR	2010	67	67	17,98	15,78	10,98	58	8,78	56
EAS	KOR	2009	65	65	25,19	20,50	20,19	12	15,50	20
	MNG	2009	55	60	17,59	14,30	17,59	34	14,30	30
	MYS	2010	60	60	19,70	17,56	19,70	16	17,56	9
	PHL	2011	77	77	18,50	15,33	1,50	63	N/C	63
	THA	2011	60	60	22,62	20,03	22,62	3	20,03	3

⁵⁵ The age 60 was selected due to data restrictions and to maximize variance, it’s not intended to convey a normative idea of “old age”. It’s worth noting that the UN population division’s data follows the trend of “counting-by-fives” as well.

⁵⁶ This is inherently counterfactual for two countries – Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Antigua and Barbuda, which do not set qualifying ages in their legislation, but define the eligibility conditional on being “aged X in year Y”. The qualifying age thus increases by year, reflecting that such pensions were originally intended as a stopgap measure to complement a contributory program, which was expected to reach universal coverage at some point (Willmore 2006). This of course has a significant bearing on the rights character of these pension, because each passing year deteriorates the right.

	TLS	2010	60	60	17,26	15,58	17,26	37	15,58	19
	VNM	2010	60	60	24,43	18,81	24,43	1	18,81	6
	WSM	2010	65	65	20,57	15,80	15,57	45	10,80	47
	ARM	2011	65	65	22,13	17,69	17,13	38	12,69	36
	AZE	2010	62	67	19,70	15,95	17,70	32	8,95	54
	GEO	2010	60	65	21,24	17,16	21,24	7	12,16	40
	KAZ	2009	58	63	18,74	13,41	18,74	22	10,41	51
ECS	KGZ	2006	58	63	18,40	14,52	18,40	26	11,52	45
	TJK	2005	60	65	19,91	14,77	19,91	13	9,77	53
	TKM	2010	57	62	18,66	14,88	18,66	23	12,88	34
	TUR	2011	65	65	22,93	18,67	17,93	29	13,67	31
	UZB	2009	60	65	19,66	16,49	19,66	17	11,49	46
	ARG	2011	70	70	23,75	18,72	13,75	49	8,72	57
	ATG	2005	77	77	21,79	18,92	4,79	62	1,92	62
	BHS	2011	65	65	23,81	20,44	18,81	21	15,44	23
	BLZ	2010	65	67	22,51	19,34	17,51	36	12,34	39
	BOL	2011	60	60	19,63	17,54	19,63	18	17,54	10
	BRA	2010	65	65	22,53	19,50	17,53	35	14,50	29
	BRB	2008	65	65	20,73	17,41	15,73	44	12,41	38
	CHL	2009	65	65	24,52	20,71	19,52	19	15,71	18
	COL	2010	52	57	21,98	19,46	21,98	6	19,46	5
	CRI	2010	65	65	24,49	21,61	19,49	20	16,61	15
	DOM	2007	90	90	22,66	20,10	-7,34	64	-9,9	64
	ECU	2011	65	65	24,73	22,35	19,73	15	17,35	11
LCN	GTM	2011	65	65	22,68	20,28	17,68	33	15,28	25
	GUY	2010	65	65	17,27	14,94	12,27	56	9,94	52
	JAM	2011	60	60	22,49	20,05	22,49	4	20,05	2
	KNA	2010	62	62						
	MEX	2011	70	70	23,67	21,62	13,67	50	11,62	44
	PAN	2011	70	70	25,17	22,65	15,17	46	12,65	37
	PER	2011	65	65	22,96	20,02	17,96	28	15,02	27
	PRY	2011	65	65	21,85	19,73	16,85	42	14,73	28
	SLV	2011	70	70	23,11	20,73	13,11	54	10,73	49
	SUR	2009	60	60	19,76	16,48	19,76	14	16,48	16
	TTO	2011	65	65	19,96	15,69	14,96	47	10,69	50
	URY	2009	70	70	23,80	18,54	13,80	48	8,54	58
	VCT	2011	67	67	20,57	18,74	13,57	51	11,74	42
	VEN	2011	55	60	22,33	19,88	22,33	5	19,88	4
	DZA	2009	60	60	18,62	16,77	18,62	24	16,77	13
MEA	EGY	2010	65	65	18,46	15,78	13,46	52	10,78	48
	OMN	2008	60	60	21,07	18,46	21,07	8	18,46	7
	BGD	2011	62	65	18,93	17,84	16,93	41	12,84	35
SAS	IND	2009	60	60	17,79	15,71	17,79	31	15,71	17
	MDV	2011	65	65	21,62	20,38	16,62	43	15,38	24
	NPL	2010	70	70	17,43	15,88	7,43	61	5,88	60
	BWA	2010	65	65	17,20	13,81	12,20	57	8,81	55
	CPV	2010	60	60	21,06	16,76	21,06	9	16,76	14
	KEN	2010	65	65	18,12	16,71	13,12	53	11,71	43
SSF	LSO	2009	65	70	15,81	14,10	10,81	59	4,10	61
	MOZ	2008	55	60	16,97	15,46	16,97	40	15,46	22
	MUS	2010	60	60	20,73	16,83	20,73	10	16,83	12
	NAM	2008	60	60	17,85	15,46	17,85	30	15,46	21

SWZ	2009	60	60	16,97	15,18	16,97	39	15,18	26
SYC	2006	63	63	21,44	16,63	18,44	25	13,63	32
UGA	2011	65	65	18,07	16,80	13,07	55	11,80	41
ZAF	2011	60	60	18,06	13,47	18,06	27	13,47	33
Mean		63,18	64,18	20,65	17,65	16,98		13,38	

Table 3: Qualifying ages & life expectancies

Source: FLOORCASH Database – principal investigator: L. Leisering;
Life expectancy data from UN World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision

The most obvious and almost tautological observation is that lower qualifying ages extend the years of social pensions coverage across countries. However due to differences in life expectancy this relationship is far from linear. When combined, high qualifying ages and low life expectancy can effectively deteriorate social rights. The Philippines are an extreme example of such a combination, where the high qualifying age of 77 years for both genders leaves men aged 60 without any coverage and women with just two years of coverage (assuming average life expectancy). The Dominican Republic is another extreme with its high qualifying age of 90 effectively excluding the elderly population from receiving the benefit. Nepal and Indonesia are other cases, which cover well below 10 years on average due to their high qualifying age of 70. In Latin-America Argentina, Panama, Mexico and El Salvador feature the same conditions, but end up providing social pensions for a longer period of time due to higher life expectancy in these countries. However they are still below the average life-phase coverage of *all* social pensions. On the opposite side of the spectrum low qualifying ages and high life expectancy extend the social rights provided by social pensions. Quite a few countries provide over 20 years of coverage for women and over 15 years of coverage for men, which is on one level with the coverage reached in the German social insurance (Deutscher Rentenversicherung Bund 2012). Women furthermore receive more coverage in *all* countries, sometimes significantly more than men. Later analysis will return to the gendered assumptions underlying some social pensions. Within the “top group”, which combine low qualifying ages and high life expectancy, no regional patterns are visible *prima facie*. A closer inspection reveals that the bigger Sub-Saharan countries are absent. Some countries in the region are notable in so far as they – Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland – use lower qualifying ages not to extend the coverage period of social pensions, but to counteract low life expectancy, which lifts their coverage to average levels. Others – Botswana and Lesotho and the pilot programs in Kenya and Uganda – apply less generous conditions and thus provide less coverage (especially for men)⁵⁷. Guyana is notable because it is the only country in Latin America that shows the same pattern of low life-expectancy and medium qualifying age (65), which renders its coverage span the lowest for males and second lowest for females on the continent even though others have higher qualifying ages.

These various combinations of qualifying ages and life expectancy show that the conditions of entitlement are used in different ways: One the one hand countries *decouple* the implementation of social pensions from an extension of social rights by adjusting the qualifying age upwards. On the other hand the policy model of “counting-by-fives”, which has been observed for social insurance programs in the OECD for a long time (Turner 2007), may be used to deal with the complexities of setting pensionable ages in the face of uncertainty when *adapting* social pensions to local conditions.

⁵⁷ Lesotho is in the process of equalizing the qualifying age at 65.

And even decoupling may only deteriorate social rights in the short term and pave the way for future extension. The Philippine's social pension as established by the "Expanded Senior Citizen Act of 2010" intends to cover all "Senior Citizen's", which are defined as resident citizens aged 60 and above, but "prioritizes eligibility by age", "because of funding constraints"⁵⁸. Such an incremental implementation of social rights may be more realistic than providing generous social rights on paper and radically decoupling the institutional realities from this, as is the case in the Dominican Republic. But "planning for future progress" (Meyer et al. 1997: 155) can also become the permanent *modus vivendi* of social rights in parts of the global South. The Philippines did not abandon its goals of covering all senior citizens, but *postponed* it, choosing a popular way of conforming to legitimate expectations of modern statehood⁵⁹.

1.2. Universalism & means-tests

The "conditions of circumstance" (Hubl/Pfeifer 2013), i.e. the conditions that pertain the material situation of potential beneficiaries, are decisive in determining the character of the social rights institutionalized by non-contributory pensions. As pointed out above the popular juxtaposition of universal and selective benefits (Leisering/Barrientos 2013) and the identification of social citizenship with the former, does not capture the variation embodied in the concept of social citizenship as put forth by T.H. Marshall. Going through the three types of eligibility criteria, which can be distinguished among social pensions (cf. Godemé 2013: 111-2), special emphasis is put on whether and how these conditions create a right to a minimum income in old age:

1. *Universal* social pensions: These non-contributory programs (sometimes also called *basic pensions*) are paid out to all individual citizens (and sometimes long-term residents) of a country regardless of income, assets or other indicators of the material situation of individuals. They embody the ideal type a social right to a minimum income in old age conditioned only by citizenship, sometimes referred to as the "basic security" (Korpi/Palme 1998) model of social security. Within the global South a quite diverse set of countries has embraced the idea of "basic security" provision (Table 4). One common trait can be easily identified though: They are all small countries in terms of population.

These schemes generally are at the core of income security in old age policies in these countries, but vary in the extent they are supplemented by other pillars of pension-provision as well as their origin. Kazakhstan and Georgia introduced "state basic pensions" in 2005. Both serve as a universal zero-pillar in a wider pension scheme complemented by mandatory individual accounts in Kazakhstan and a small employment related component in Georgia. In these two cases the reform of the inherited soviet state pension system led to the introduction of universal social pensions. Such a *replacement* of older mechanisms of old age provision with a universal social pension also happened in the Seychelles two years after the coup d'état by the Seychelles People's Progressive Front (1979). Political events such as independence of a country or democratization preceded the adoption of universal social pension in Timor Leste, Namibia, Brunei Dussalem and Guyana. The Surinamese scheme was intro-

⁵⁸ <http://www.issa.int/Observatory/Country-Profiles/Regions/Asia-and-the-Pacific/Philippines/Reforms2/%28id%29/4150>

⁵⁹ According to a press release by the Philippines "Department of Social Welfare and Development" from January 2013 aptly titled "Moving Ahead with its Convergence Strategy", the age of eligibility is still set at 77 years: <http://www.dswd.gov.ph/2013/01/dswd-in-2012-moving-ahead-with-its-convergence-strategy-2/>

duced (1973) shortly before independence (1975) and only later (1981) regulated by law⁶⁰. In Mauritius a means-tested social pension was introduced under British colonial rule as a stopgap measure, but persisted and was universalized in 1976⁶¹.

Universal	Pension-Tested	Means-Tested		
		General Means-Test	Minimum Standard	Poverty-Tested Selective Poverty Targeting
KIR	TJK	CHL†	ARG	DOM
WSM	BHS	ZAF	URY	MOZ
GUY	GTM	KOR	BRA	MYS
BWA	ARM	SWZ	TTO	<i>KEN</i>
TLS	UZB		VEN	DZA
MUS	KGZ		CRI	OMN
KAZ	<i>PER</i>		TUR	BLZ
GEO	MEX			EGY
BOL	VCT			VNM*
NAM	PAN			<i>SLV</i>
SUR	MNG			<i>IDN</i>
BRN	BRB			PHL
SYC	LSO			<i>PRY</i>
<i>UGA</i>	THA			ECU
NPL	MDV			IND
	CHN			COL
	AZE			JAM
	TKM			BGD
	VNM*			ATG
	KNA			CPV

Italics: Pilot program; *: Differentiated by age; †: Additionally pension-tested

Table 4: Typology of resource tests

Source: FLOORCASH Database – principal investigator: L. Leisering

2. Pension-tested social pensions are paid out to all citizens that are not eligible to contributory pensions or receive contributory benefits below a certain level, which are then topped up to reach that minimum by the pension-tested non-contributory payment. As opposed to minimum pensions, which set up a similar floor within a contributory pension scheme, these programs must not be dependent upon contributions. As such they institutionalize a guaranteed minimum income in old age. Their role within the pension system depends on the coverage of the contributory pillar and thus may change over time representing changes in for-

⁶⁰ The universal programs in Suriname and Guyana are often overlooked in research on social pensions, e.g. Müller (2008: 163) claims that “Bolivia is the only Latin American country to feature a universal old-age pension scheme”.

⁶¹ It also had been universal from 1958 till 1965, when a mild form of means-testing was introduced (Willmore 2008), which probably helped building a strong constituency preventing the universal pension from being replaced with a contributory system as originally envisioned by government officials and thus fostering the “unlikely success story” (Sandbrook et. al. 2008) of Mauritian social policy.

mal labor market participation. Two ideal-types of pension-tested programs can be conceived. They can either act as a residual safety net in contexts where entitlements to contributory pensions are ubiquitous or they provide the main back-bone of the pension system in contexts where contributory pensions are only available to a minority. The former is the case in the post-soviet states, where entitlements to contributory benefits were inherited from the days of virtual full employment in a planned economy⁶². However this is expected to change once the changes in contributions (cf. Falkingham/Vlachtoni 2012) shift coverage from the contributory to the non-contributory pillar, possibly leading to reform-pressure. In contexts of low social insurance coverage these programs can have almost universal coverage⁶³. With regards to social rights this difference is negligible though, because the social pension serves as a minimum income guarantee in both cases.

3. Even though *means-tested* social pensions show a lot more variation than the aforementioned categories and are by far the most popular type of social pension in the developing as well as the developed world⁶⁴, so far no research has critically examined the different mechanisms of assessing means from a perspective of social citizenship. The development policy literature discusses means-tests in terms of “targeting performance” (cf. Coady, Grosh and Hoddinott 2004; Ravallion et al. 2008). It is interested in how different types of means-test affect their effectiveness in reaching the poorest parts of the population and what distributional consequences they entail. Even the research on minimum income protection schemes (MIP) in the developed world, which focuses on this kind of benefit, sometimes excluding universal programs from their definition all together (Bahle et al. 2011: 13), has never analyzed the means-test mechanisms themselves. Bahle et al. (2011: 15) differentiate the scope and extent of means-tests, i.e. the “number of persons” and range of “income components” included, but only to delineate their object of investigation. Whereas this research assumes that means-tests across countries work in roughly the same way, social policy research that operates from the perspective of social citizenship in the global South has to ask whether these programs actually provide a minimum income guarantee, similar to the programs investigated in the literature on developed welfare states.

Following Gough et al. (1997: 19) “poverty-testing” can be distinguished from “general means or income-testing”. The former targets people below a certain threshold, which is assumed to delineate poverty from non-poverty⁶⁵. The latter serves to relate means to benefits across a wider spectrum of resources, often primarily to exclude the wealthy. The distinction of Gough et al. actually relies on two dimensions: 1. The in-/exclusiveness of the means-test, which may either be designed to target the poor or exclude the wealthy, and 2. the way benefits are related to means. Benefits may either be strongly coupled to the income threshold, granting beneficiaries enough to lift them above the threshold, thus institutionalizing a minimum income guarantee; or benefit levels may only loosely (or not at all) related to the in-

⁶² These programs were target at people with insufficient employment records, which in circumstances of virtual full employment rendered them programs primarily for those disabled from birth.

⁶³ Lesotho’s program is often characterized as being “universal”, which may be true in outcome, but not by design.

⁶⁴ Data on the mechanics of means-tests of social pensions are hard to come by and may partly be inaccurate. The following discussion presents an ideal-typical scheme for distinguishing different types of means-test, presents a tentative allocation of social pensions based on the available data and discusses cases for which more information is available in some depth.

⁶⁵ This matches the criteria Bahle et al. (2011) apply to delineate MIP to non-MIP means-tested programs.

come or resource threshold⁶⁶. Gough et al. assume that only the two aforementioned combinations of these dimensions are found in the real world, which may be accurate when looking at means-tested benefits in the usual set of OECD countries. Both variants of means-testing establish a “socio-culturally defined minimum” (Leisering 2010: 11), but only a combination of targeting poverty and setting benefit levels according to that target aims primarily at securing that minimum⁶⁷.

Among developing countries a third type is frequently identified: Programs that explicitly target the poor elderly, often not using income but other indicators and mechanisms to identify beneficiaries, which provide benefits that are not directly related to the assessed resources⁶⁸. These programs apply “selective poverty targeting” in the sense, that they aim to target the poor, but do not relate their benefits to the mechanics of beneficiary selection and thus do not delineate a “safety net below which nobody should fall” (Gough et al. 1997: 19) in the strong sense, because means-testing is limited to identifying those individuals (or households) of the target population deemed most vulnerable. Benefit levels then do create a minimum, but at a level below or unrelated to assessed means. In contexts of rampant poverty, social pensions applying selective poverty targeting may produce similar results to general means-tested schemes. Generally schemes, which only target a small range of income groups move towards programs with a wider means-test in terms of coverage when poverty rates are high among the target group. If an inclusive means-test is coupled to the benefit level, the latter combination may be called a “semi-universal” means-test, which then includes large parts of the populations and lifts them above a minimum. Because the latter combination is not present in our sample, three types of means-test can be distinguished among the developing world’s social pensions: General means-testing, limited poverty targeting and minimum standard testing. All three establish a minimum income, but do so in different ways: General means-testing establishes a minimum income not through its means-test but through its benefit level and pays some benefit to a wide array of income groups. Limited poverty targeting conditions the right to a minimum income on passing a poverty-test and sets the minimum at a different level. Only minimum standard testing synchronizes means-tests and benefit levels, so one socio-culturally defined minimum determines both eligibility and benefits indicating a high institutionalization of the social minimum in the fabric of a country’s social policy.

While a lot of minimum income protection schemes in the developed world follow the latter pattern, it is comparatively rare among social pensions in the developing world. It is only found in a few Latin American and Caribbean countries and Turkey. These countries differ in the extent and scope (Bahle et al. 2011: 15) of the means test, i.e. whether they include only

⁶⁶ A “disregard level”, that determines when the full benefit level is to be granted and when benefits are to be reduced, may incorporate elements of minimum income protection in the strong sense to these programs: When the disregard level is close to the benefit level programs function as a minimum standard, because full benefits are only granted to those close to the politically defined minimum. More distance between the disregard and benefit level on the other hand grants a minimum to a broader spectrum of income groups and thus creates more egalitarian benefit payments.

⁶⁷ However this distinction is not always clear cut due to exemptions on income or assets, which render the means-test more generous, or familial obligations to provide support before social assistance benefits can be received (cf. Bahle et al. 2011: 15).

⁶⁸ In the case of so called proxy means-testing this is the case *eo ipso*, because the indicators used to construct “poverty” are often multi-dimensional and thus can not be mapped onto the one dimension of benefits: money in a local currency.

individual or household resources. The Brazilian BPC does take into account household resources, setting its entitlement threshold at a per capita income less than a quarter of the minimum wage to qualify for benefits, which are set at the level of the minimum wage. If more than one person of the target group, those aged 65 and above, is living in the household the first benefit is added to the income considered for the means-test of the second (and so on). Even though the BPC is conceived as an individual benefit, this type of means-testing reveals it to be geared heavily towards extending household resources. As such the minimum wage is assumed to delineate the socio-cultural minimum for households of four or more people, below which nobody – at least if elderly are living within that household – is allowed to fall. Trinidad and Tobago’s “Senior Citizen Pension” features a more individualized means-test. Its income-threshold is set at TT\$3000/month and the pension grants enough to lift the beneficiary above that threshold, but at least TT\$1000/month, using a sliding income/benefit scale thus institutionalizing an individual minimum income. The Turkish non-contributory pension benefits according to law 2022 takes into account household resources, but grants the full benefit to anybody falling below the individual means-test threshold.

Coupling of means-test and benefit level

Range of income groups	Strong	Loose/No
Wide (excluding the wealthy)	(Semi-Universal)	General Means-Test
Small (targeting the poor)	Minimum Standard	Selective Poverty Targeting

Table 5: Types of means-tests

It is notable that the Latin American countries in this group, except for Venezuela, are all members of the “advanced/generous social policy regimes” identified by Huber/Stephens (2012: 76-85) at the end of the ISI period and the “proto welfare state regime” identified via cluster analysis by Gough/Abu Sharkh (2010: 46-7). Their non-contributory pensions also have existed for a longer time in some form⁶⁹. Taken together this indicates that the institutionalization of a minimum income for the elderly has to be understood as part of a wider array of social policies (e.g. contributory pensions) in these cases, in which they fulfill the residual but at the same time fundamental role of defining the “minimum standard of living below which no one in society should be allowed to fall” (Bahle et. al. 2011: 2), and as such are quite similar to developed welfare states.

Among the few countries that use a general means-test to provide benefits to a wide range of the target population Chile is another (and the last) one identified by Huber/Stephens as being an “advanced social policy regime”. The Chilean means-test is actually only a general means-test in the first step, which targets the lowest three quintiles of the income distribution (bottom 60%⁷⁰). It then grants benefits to those not eligible to a contributory pension, combining a general means-test to crowd out the wealthy with a pension-test to limit benefits to those not receiving higher tier benefits. This has been termed “basic unversalism” (Huber/Stephens 2012: 180), because it guarantees a minimum income to those in the bottom

⁶⁹ Uruguay’s non-contributory pension was first introduced in 1919, Argentina’s in 1948, Costa Rica’s in 1974 and Brazil’s old program – the Renda Mensal Vitalícia – in 1974 as well. But as our analysis has shows these programs were considerably extended in the 2000s coinciding with the global wave of non-contributory pension expansion.

⁷⁰ This was scaled up from 40% in 2009 when the program was introduced.

60%. By combining a general means-test and a pension-test it excludes more beneficiaries than schemes that just apply a general means-test.

Such a scheme is the “Basic Old-Age Pension” in the Republic of Korea, which explicitly targets the lowest 70% of the income distribution among the elderly and grants its full benefit of 90.000KRW to anybody with incomes up to 80000KRW below the means-test threshold of 700.000KRW/month. Beneficiaries with incomes⁷¹ above that amount get reduced benefits. However this range is rather narrow and thus full benefits are paid to the majority of beneficiaries, excluding only the wealthy and providing reduced benefits only to the wealthiest among those who pass the means-test. Figure 2 illustrates this relationship. The Korean “Basic Old-Age Pension” provides flat-rate benefits, which are far below the means-test threshold (11,69% of it), across a wide range of incomes.

The South African Old Age Grant’s functions the other way round. Its means-test is set at a rather high level as well (3,28 times the maximum benefit level), but reduced benefits are granted to those with incomes greater than the maximum benefit level⁷². Compared to South Korea the level of benefits is coupled more tightly to the assessed resources, guaranteeing the maximum benefit only to those who would not otherwise command over that amount of resources (Figure 2). Depending on how benefit levels are determined and related to assessed means, general means-tested schemes can shift towards the model of minimum standard provision. However they differ in that some benefit is paid out to a much larger range of incomes. When flat rate benefits are paid out to a significant share of the population, as is the case in Swaziland, where the means-test is set at five times the amount of the benefit level, they verge on universal programs.

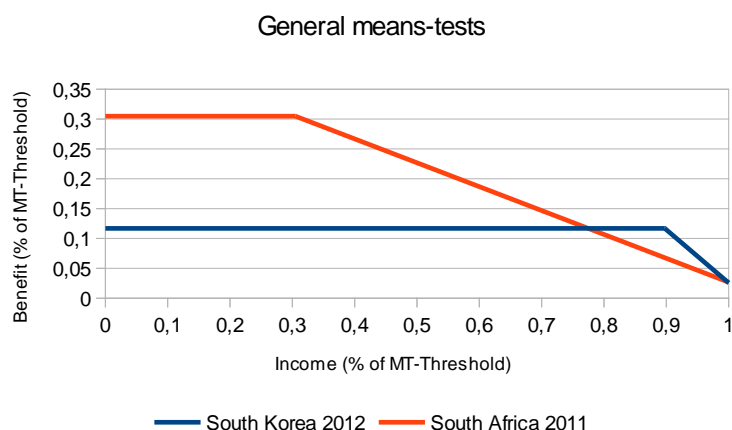


Figure 2: General means-tests & disregard amounts

Programs with selective poverty targeting provide flat rate benefits and explicitly target the needy. They differ in their targeting method, but have in common that targeting and benefit levels are completely unrelated. The following discussion presents different types of targeting. It does not intend to be a comprehensive discussion of targeting methods of social trans-

⁷¹ Assets are added in income calculations.

⁷² The South African government is in the process of adjusting the “disregard amount” upwards. Whereas in 2010 it was set at 56% of the maximum benefit level, it was adjusted to match the benefit level in 2011.

fers (for an overview see: Coady/Grosh/Hoddinott 2004) in terms of their effectiveness, but rather highlight how different methods enforce the *selection* of those considered the neediest, which also indicated that these programs often do not aim at establishing a social minimum but are focused on poverty *reduction*⁷³. Each targeting method is presented using a case example, which intends to show how eligibility is limited.

One way of separating beneficiary selection from benefit levels is analogous to the relation of means and benefits in general means-tests as described above. The eligibility income threshold is set above the benefit level of the pension. As opposed to the general means-tested programs described above the threshold is set at the lower end of the income distribution. This combination is uncommon, many less developed countries instead rely on other mechanisms to target the poor.

Proxy means-tests are used by many countries to target their social cash transfers, because they are deemed more efficient at identifying the poor by applying a multidimensional measure of poverty, which does not reduce poverty to a lack of income or assets. This is especially salient in contexts where the commodification of economies has not yet reached every aspect of household reproduction (cf. Esping-Andersen 1990: 21) and/or reliable data on monetary resources, i.e. income and assets, are hard to come by. India's social pension, the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme, determines eligibility according to the national "below poverty line" (BPL) measure, which also regulates access to other transfers and services. Since 2002 the BPL classification is awarded to households according to a questionnaire of thirteen questions⁷⁴, representing thirteen dimensions of welfare/deprivation including food, housing, land ownership, assets, education etc.. The answers are then assigned scores from 0 to 4, which are aggregated⁷⁵ and then function as a welfare score ranging from 0 to 52. A poverty cut-off is then set at the state or union level. This mechanism of determining eligibility is *incommensurable* to the benefits it regulates access to. It selects beneficiaries using criteria that are determined independently of the benefits granted.

Another way of *separating* the selection of beneficiaries from the level of benefits is the imposition of a quota, i.e. setting the number of beneficiaries in advance and then using a means-test to assign who is eligible⁷⁶. Any kind of means-test may be applied in such a setting to determine *who* is eligible, but proxy means-tests are especially popular: Governments simply set the eligibility cut off at a level that includes only the projected number of beneficiaries⁷⁷. Bangladesh's Old Age Allowance Program utilizes community committees to identify beneficiaries. Each ward is assigned a certain number of beneficiaries according to popu-

⁷³ In developed countries this might be the case as well, when the means-test and benefit level of the minimum income protection schemes are not related to national poverty lines. This establishes two kinds of poverty lines, one institutional and the other discursive with the latter serving only as a normative yardstick.

⁷⁴ When introduced in 1992 the BPL status was determined using income data, only in 2002 it was recast as a multidimensional poverty measure, i.e. proxy means-test (Alkire/Seth 2009).

⁷⁵ This assumes perfect substitutability and equal weighting of the dimensions.

⁷⁶ The South Korean "Basic Old Age Pension" also applies this mechanism, but uses it to exclude the wealthy.

⁷⁷ Governments may of course set means-tests thresholds with a certain size of the target group and the government's budget in mind in other cases as well. However once the criteria of the means-tests are fixed, they become the *only* selection mechanism. Means-test that apply quotas *first* explicitly limit eligibility to a certain number of beneficiaries and *then* select using a means-test.

lation size⁷⁸ and then beneficiaries are selected from the pool of applications by two committees using undocumented criteria to select the neediest of the applicants. Only one selection criterion is imposed through official regulation, which demands that at least half of the beneficiaries must be women. So in the case of quotas there are always two selection mechanisms: The selection of the quota itself and the targeting method used to assign eligibility, both of which bear no relationship to the benefits.

Instead of applying community committees the selection process can also be performed by social workers, as it is the case in e.g. Guatemala (but without the imposition of a quota in this case). By rendering eligibility dependent upon the discretionary judgment about the status of “extreme poverty” it is separated from the benefit as well.

A fourth way of increasing the selectivity of the means-test can be achieved through extending the means-test to the family of the potential beneficiary. By putting a strong emphasis on subsidiarity, Oman restricts access to those who have also exhausted all informal security mechanisms.

1.3. Benefit generosity

As the discussion above showed how the conditions of entitlement may render social pensions closer to *guaranteeing* a minimum income to the elderly population above a certain age or provide it only *selectively*. In terms of the social rights of social pensions the latter programs often fall short of institutionalizing citizenship *rights*, because selection mechanisms may be oblique, quotas may be dependent upon budgetary considerations or discretionary elements may be introduced. But the degree of selectivity is only one dimension of the social rights of social pensions. All schemes do provide benefits according to their criteria, whether these benefits can be considered to provide citizenship rights depends first and foremost on their generosity, i.e. benefit level. Does it lift the recipients above national or international poverty lines? Does it provide an adequate standard of living according to the standards prevailing in the national society (cf. Esping-Andersen 1990: 47)? In the following section the absolute and relative benefit levels of the social pensions will be compared. Studies on benefit adequacy of minimum income protection schemes (Nelson 2010, 2011; Bahle et al. 2011: 156-166) emphasize that wage replacement rates, which are often used in the comparative welfare state literature on social insurance schemes (Danforth/Stephens 2011) as an indicator of benefit generosity, are less meaningful in the context of schemes that do not aim at securing a standard of living but provide a minimum income. Benefits are hence often compared in their relation to national poverty lines, average or minimum wages, the national median income or in absolute terms. The following discussion will first focus on the absolute benefit levels and their relation to national and international poverty lines and then situate benefit levels in the context of societal averages by comparing benefits relative to GNI per capita and average pre tax wages. The first measure resembles Marshall’s minimalist conception of social citizenship as the “right to a modicum of economic welfare”, the second the maximalist (Powell 2002) definition as the right to “live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society” (Marshall 1950: 11).

While the data on benefit levels was collected for the most recent year available up to 2011, not all countries had information available up to that year. To facilitate comparison benefit level were converted to 2005 international dollars using the private consumption

⁷⁸ The absolute number of beneficiaries has been steadily increased since the introduction of the program in 1997.

purchasing power parities from the 2005 round of the International Comparison Program. This expresses benefit levels in a uniform price level that is identical to the one used by the international poverty line and the national poverty lines collected by Ravallion et al. (2008). These national poverty lines were often construed as part of World Bank poverty assessments, which were carried out in different years. Even though they are also expressed in 2005 i\$ and as such comparable, one has to be careful when interpreting the relationship: The poverty lines were not conceived in the same year as the benefit levels and may have changed in the meantime. However, if they were only updated according to changes in consumer prices, these poverty lines should still be valid. Generally the poverty lines can be interpreted as fulfilling a similar function to the EU “at-risk-of” poverty threshold. They provide a normative yardstick to guide policy making, which was set in cooperation with a supranational institution. As opposed to the EU poverty threshold it is not set in a uniform relation to national income levels, but mostly using some version of the “cost of basic needs” method (Ravallion et al. 2008: 7) adapted to national circumstances. The (revised) international poverty line of \$1,25/day (“dollar a day”) was constructed using the mean of the poverty lines in the 15 poorest countries (Ravallion et al. 2008: 23), resulting in a monthly minimum income of i\$38, which is represented by a thick red line in Figure 3.

Just as national poverty lines average wages are not available for all countries. To compensate for the lack of wage data, benefits compared to monthly gross national income per capita is also included as a proxy of average incomes in an economy, which includes incomes other than those from employment. Those are represented as pre-tax amounts as provided by the ILO “Key Indicators of the Labour Market”.

The benefit levels used are *individual* benefits not taking into account household composition or resources. They represent the benefit a single elderly individual qualifies for assuming eligibility and no other sources of income. On the one hand this is a conservative way of assessing benefit levels, because they are assumed to be the only income of an individual – transfers or otherwise. On the other hand it neglects the fact that benefit sharing within households is quite common and may often be considered by policy makers when setting benefit levels.

a) Absolute Levels, national and international poverty lines

Looking at the absolute levels (Figure 3) three striking observations can be made: 1) There is a lot of variation in benefit levels across the 65 pensions. This reflects the differences in development – as measured in GDP per capita – in the countries reaching a correlation of 0.65. Countries such as Argentina, Trinidad & Tobago, Venezuela and Brazil reach benefit levels close to those of European minimum income protection schemes (cf. Hubl/Bahle 2013). On the opposing end Mozambique, Bangladesh, Tajikistan and India lie far below national and international poverty lines. 2) But the majority of social pensions do lift people above the international poverty line of 38i\$/month. 50 of the 65 provide benefits above the line demarcating “extreme poverty” in the international discourse. According to this standard a majority of social pensions do provide transfers that lift recipients out of extreme forms of poverty. 3) Looking at national poverty lines, which are not available for all countries, the familiar picture from the research on MIP in the OECD world emerges (Nelson 2011, Bahle et al. 2011): Only few schemes lift recipients above national poverty lines and absolute benefit levels and the benefit level as a proportion of national poverty lines (sometimes called “adequacy”) are highly correlated at 0.80, which is similar to the correlation between adequacy and absolute levels found in European countries (Nelson 2011: 7-8). But also similarly to Nelson’s

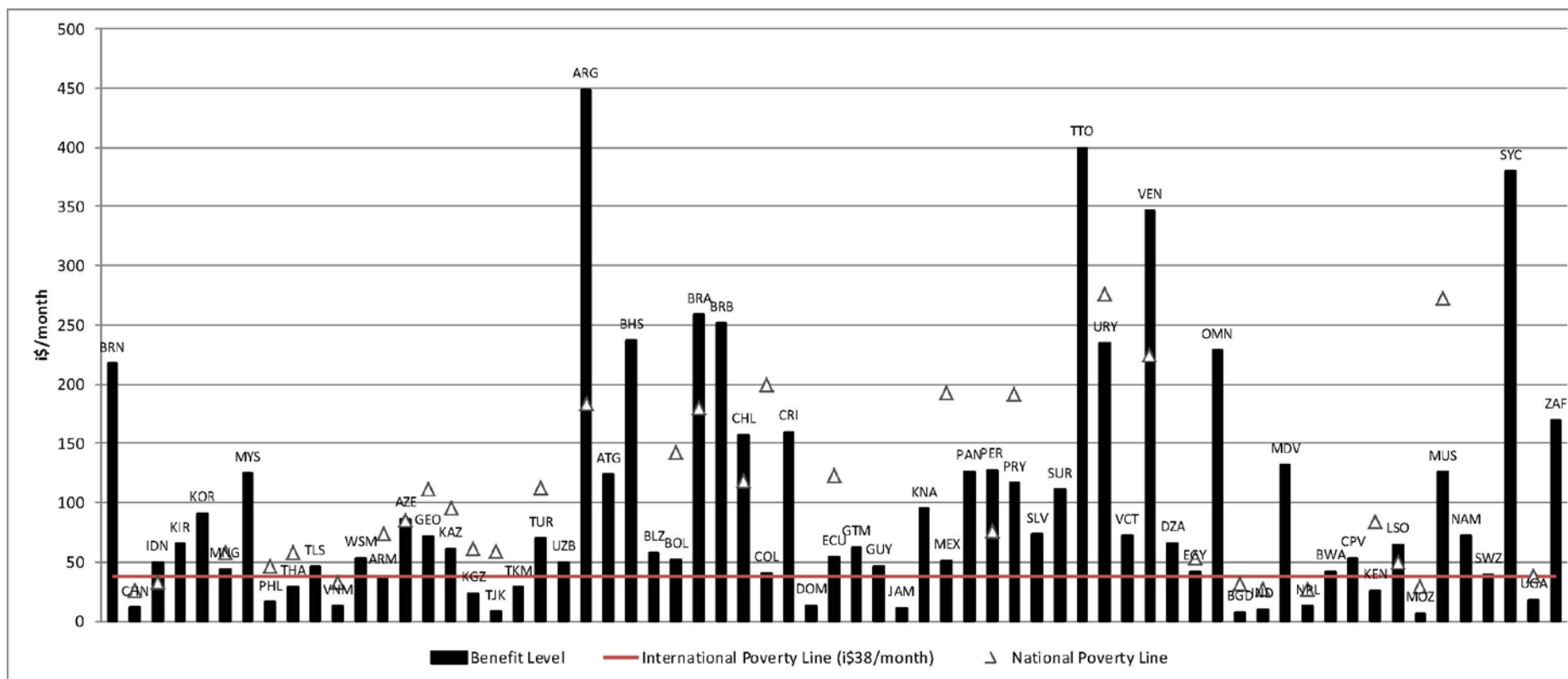


Figure 3: Absolute benefit levels of social pensions
 Source: FLOORCASH Database – principal investigator: L. Leisering; National poverty lines from Ravallion et al. 2008

findings some countries markedly change their ranking when looking at benefit levels in relation to relative poverty lines: Indonesia and Lesotho are among the countries with benefits below the median and yet provide generous benefit levels when measured against national poverty lines. The high correlation is also apparent in the fact that benefits below 60% of the national poverty line are much more likely to fall below international poverty standards. Only five out of eighteen countries with adequacy scores below 60% are still above the international poverty line. Mauritius universal social pension is generous in absolute terms, but is set at a level of only 45,9% of the national poverty line, perhaps indicating rather ambitious policy goals in terms of poverty eradication.

A fourth observation, which should be interpreted with care due to the aforementioned source of poverty lines, pertains the lack of relation between national and international poverty lines to benefit levels: No country uses either national or international poverty lines as yardsticks for setting benefit levels.

Two regional patterns of benefit levels beyond those pertaining to differences in economic development can be pointed out. First South Asias' social pensions – with the exception of the Maldives – social pensions provide meager benefits far below the international poverty line. The massive social pension programs in India⁷⁹, Bangladesh and Nepal fall short of providing a minimum, which enabled elderly to escape the most extreme forms of poverty. Opposite to that social pensions in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the exception of Jamaica, do lift recipients out of such extreme forms of poverty and some even above national poverty lines.

All in all these findings indicate that benefit adequacy as measured by national poverty lines is strongly dependent upon the absolute level of benefits, which is highly correlated to economic development. For minimum income protection programs, which aim to prevent poverty, the absolute benefit level is decisive for qualifying as realizing citizenship (cf. Marshall 1950: 54). But the absolute level is important only for “class-abatement in the early and limited sense of the term” (ibid.), which creates a minimum below which nobody should fall and thus “irons out” inequalities at the bottom. Marshall emphasizes that “equality of status”, which is the cornerstone of citizenship, goes beyond creating that minimum and equalizing incomes. It is expressed in a “new common experience” (56). Marshall conceives this mostly qualitatively, but it can be argued to have a quantitative element beyond the adequacy of benefits as measured by poverty standards: Its “inclusive” effects (Leisering/Barrientos 2013) also depend on the “standards prevailing in the society” (Marshall 1950: 11). Thus Bahle et al. (2011: 156) suggest that benefit generosity compared to incomes generated by employment can thus be “interpreted as indicators for the social inclusion of needy population groups”⁸⁰.

b) Relative levels, national incomes and wages

While the discussion of absolute benefit levels was focused on whether benefit levels are adequate compared to national and international conceptions of social *minimums*, the following discussion assesses its adequacy compared to social *standards*, which is a more demanding element of social citizenship

⁷⁹ Benefit levels in India may be higher in some states, because state governments may top up the payments by the federal government.

⁸⁰ As emphasized before this directly speaks to the issue whether social pensions are “life-course policy” (Leisering 2003). When benefit levels are closer to societal standards set by wages, they increasingly “account for a major share of total income in old age” (Leisering 2003).

Looking at the benefit levels compared to monthly GNI per capita (Figure 4) one notes that considerable variation is still present when benefits are compared to a standard of national wealth. Whereas absolute levels strongly correlated with the level of economic development, when compared to a standard of national wealth, benefit levels are no longer related to economic development ($r=-0.03$). However relative benefit levels are still, but not strongly, related to absolute levels reaching a correlation of 0.59. Some notable changes in the rank order of countries do occur. The Kenyan and Ugandan pilot projects both do not lift recipients above the international poverty line, but are generous in relative terms ranking eight and thirteen respectively. Lesotho's social pension, which marks the median absolute benefit level, is not only generous compared to the national poverty line, but also to national income. South Korea's basic pension performs the inverse movement. While it is among the more generous social pensions in absolute terms, its relative value is among the lowest of all social pensions, indicating that the minimum set by the transfer is in no relation to national incomes. Oman is another country whose high absolute benefit levels seems modest compared to national income.

The social pensions of Venezuela, Brazil, Trinidad & Tobago and the Seychelles rank among the most generous pensions in both absolute and relative terms. They lift recipients above national poverty lines and seem to provide an adequate standard of living in the more ambitious sense of realizing inclusion.

Only in few cases do the benefit levels compared to average wages show marked differences to those compared to gross national income per capita (Figure 4). The Sub-Saharan African countries South Africa, Uganda, Kenya and Swaziland are notable for providing much lower benefits compared to wages than to gross national income. The pilots in Kenya and Uganda especially fall short of reaching the same levels of generosity compared to wages than compared to national income. This might indicate that income from formal waged work is still a privileged source of income in these countries, which is only available to a minority. While social pensions are generous when set in relation to the (fictitious) income measure of GNI per capita, they fall short of reaching a) national poverty lines and b) wage levels.

The inverse can be seen in Oman: Whereas the benefit level is low compared to GNI per capita, compared to average wages it is the most generous among all social pensions. This relationship may be caused by the fact that waged labor in Oman is mostly carried out by migrant workers from neighboring countries, while the native populations lives off oil rents or other income sources derived from them. This suggests that benefit levels fall short of providing an income, which meets the standards prevailing among Oman's *citizens*, which are the only ones qualifying for the benefit.

Excluding five outliers⁸¹ the correlation between the two relative measures rises from 0.56 to 0.89, indicating that GNI per capita is generally a good proxy for incomes.

⁸¹ ZAF, UGA, KEN, OMN, IDN

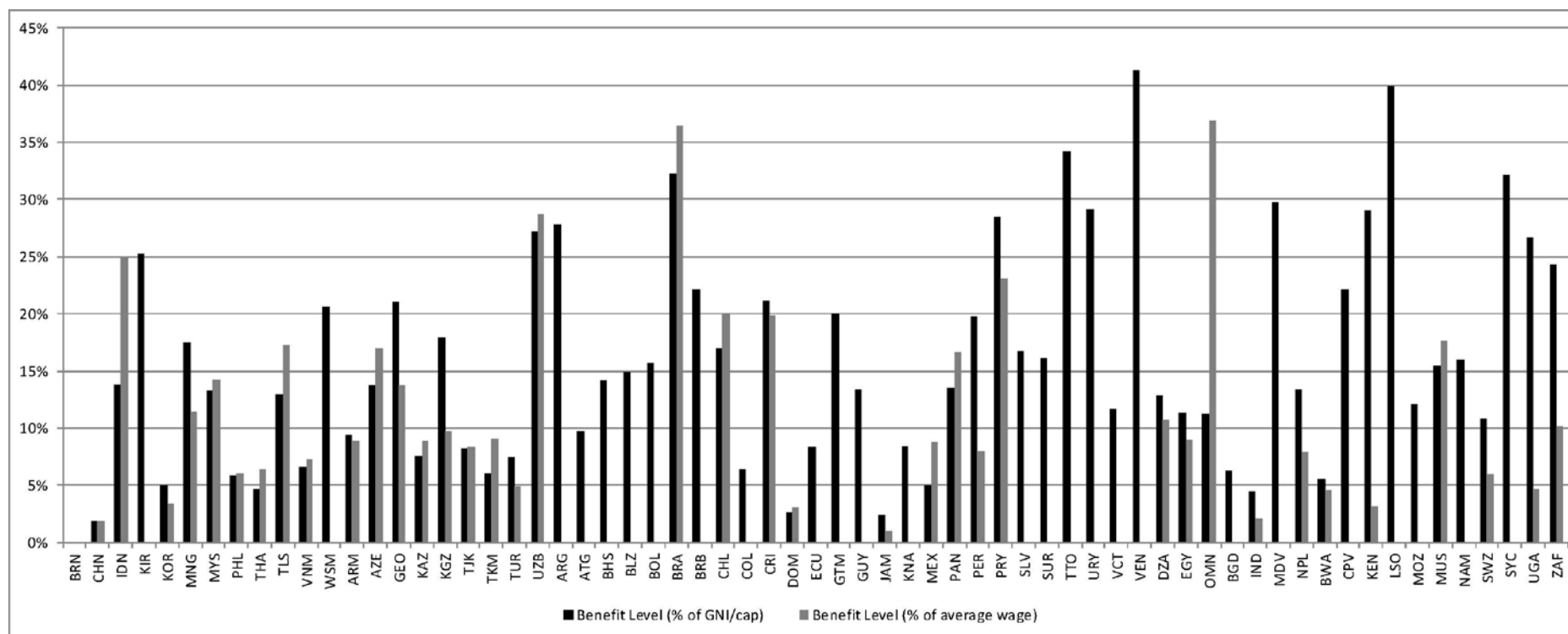


Figure 4: Relative benefit levels of social pensions

Source: FLOORCASH Database – principal investigator: L. Leisering; Average Wages from ILO Key Indicators of the Labor Market (KILM); GNI from World Development Indicators 2013

c) Concluding remarks

The relation of benefit level to national poverty lines and wages, which shows that they are much closer to the former, sometimes even surpassing them⁸², and often far below the latter, indicates that benefit levels of social pensions generally embody a minimalist conception of social citizenship (Powell 2002: 234) that is aligned more to social *minima* than to social standards. Even a very generous social pension, the Brazilian BPC, uses the *minimum* wage as the reference for benefit levels. This way of setting benefits institutionalizes a minimum that regulates both labor markets and social pension provision and thus creates a social minimum that encompasses a wide range of the population, which also helps move it closer to the standards prevailing in society, moving it upwards on the gradient between a minimalist and maximalist conception of social rights⁸³. On the other side of that gradient countries like South Korea⁸⁴ and Turkey provide benefits that bear little relation to those standards, rendering them transfers that guarantee only the very “modicum of income and security” (Marshall 1950). Among the countries that fail to provide even that modicum, using the international poverty line as a rough delineation, countries like China, Tajikistan, India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines are notable insofar their benefits are also meager in relative terms, i.e. when compared to gross national income. What they provide as a “minimum income” not only falls below national and international poverty lines, but also way short of average wages and incomes of these countries. Others, such as the aforementioned social pension pilots in Kenya and Uganda or the social pension in and Nepal, show their lack of adequacy especially when compared to national poverty lines and wages, which they fall short of.

	N	Benefit level in i\$/month	Benefit level as % of GNI/cap
Universal	15	91,23	17,29%
Pension-Tested	19	80,61	15,32%
General Means-Test	4	114,06	14,24%
Minimum Standard	7	273,71	27,63%
Selective Poverty Targeting	20	56,31	11,94%

Table 6: Benefit level & type of resource test
Source: FLOORCASH Database – principal investigator: L. Leisering

⁸² As mentioned above these poverty lines are often based on “absolute poverty measures”, setting the threshold using the value of a bundle of goods deemed necessary by national governments. When measured against a “relative poverty measure”, such as the 60% of median income “at-risk-of” poverty line set by the EU, European MIP schemes fare much worse (Nelson 2011). However these “adequacy measures” are much closer to more demanding concepts of inclusion since benefits are measured against a poverty line that in itself references a social *standard* (the median income).

⁸³ Other programs within a country, social insurances, other social assistance, may fall somewhere else on that gradient. Not even developed welfare states implement only *one* principle of provision among all transfers and services.

⁸⁴ However South Korea also provides the National Basic Livelihood Security System (NBLS), which serves as a general social assistance scheme for any citizen falling below the “minimum living costs”. If one were to apply a “risk-based” instead of a “program based” approach to social rights (Danforth/Stephens 2013: 1286) this benefit would have to be included and yield much higher benefit levels.

It is notable that the benefit level does vary systematically with the entitlement conditions (Table 6). Absolute and relative benefit levels as discussed above are by far the highest in countries which institutionalize a minimum standard, providing further evidence that these countries show a high level of needs-based social rights. Universal and pension-tested schemes exhibit similar benefit levels, indicating that these types of benefits are often used to institutionalize a minimum income for the elderly population at a fairly low level. General means-tested schemes do not fit the picture neatly, probably due to the diverse mechanics of means-tests embodied in that category, which places them in different roles in the overall pension system. As pointed out “selective poverty tests” can be implemented in a variety of ways as well, however absolute and relative benefit levels are on average below those of the social pensions with other types of eligibility conditions.

Short digression on the differentiation of social rights

As pointed out before the categorical differentiation of minimum income protection systems (Bahle et. al. 2011: 193-214) is decisive in deciding who gets what social rights. Different schemes feature different conditions of entitlement and different benefits shaping the citizenship rights and duties of different categories of the population and therefore stratifying social citizenship. These differences point towards underlying concepts of deservingness (Hubl/Pfeifer 2013), the welfare-state contexts (social insurance programs), gendered assumptions of care and work (O’Connor et. al. 1999) and labor market policies (e.g. when combining the scheme for unemployed people with activating labor market requirements). While it is beyond the scope of this study to assess the overall differences in entitlements and duties among the population in the global South with regard to their social cash transfer configurations, the presence of a categorical program for the elderly – whether means-test or universal – in the vast majority of countries with any non-contributory monetary assistance, often more generous and less prohibitive and strict in conditions of entitlement, hence more encompassing, than the programs for e.g. families with children, such as the famous Latin American CCTs, hint at the fact, that the underlying deservingness conceptions resemble their developed counterparts. The “deservingness criteria”, which have been identified in developed countries (van Oorshot 2000), seem to also guide the set up of non-contributory transfers elsewhere⁸⁵. Some qualification may be added to this general assertion by looking at differing conditions and entitlements *within* social pensions, which takes two shapes: Some social pensions include further differentiations in their conditions of eligibility and benefits associated with them by *age*⁸⁶. *Gender* differences may translate into different entitlement conditions, mainly differences in pensionable age, or may be reinforced more subtly by undermining individual entitlements through means-tests or benefit levels, which take into account household resources (Orloff 1993: 319)⁸⁷. While especially the latter phenomenon is well known to scholars of

⁸⁵ Hubl/Pfeifer (2013) conceptualize the causality to run from a “deeply rooted and widely shared value system” to “welfare state attitudes and welfare state institutions” (164). For purposes of this study the question whether this holds true for the developing countries under study may very well be left open.

⁸⁶ Mauritius, Thailand and South Africa increase benefits in higher age groups. Hong Kong and Vietnam apply less strict tests of resources: Vietnam applies ‘only’ a pension-test for beneficiaries aged 80 years and older, Hong Kong’s “Old Age Allowance” is universal instead of income-tested for anybody aged 70 and above.

⁸⁷ A complete analysis of social pensions and gender would have to include the non-contributory widow pensions, which are present in many developing countries, and trace the “maternalist” origins of the gender gap in qualifying ages (Orloff 1993: 321).

the welfare state, who discuss it under the heading of “(de)familialization” (Esping-Andersen 1999), a third type of categorical difference is peculiar: Nepal’s social pension differentiates its eligibility by ethnicity, allowing Dalit to receive benefits ten years earlier (60 vs. 70) than the rest of the population⁸⁸. Taking into account life expectancy at age 60, this increases the duration of receiving the pension threefold (see Table 3). Such mechanisms can be used to redistribute between groups of the population, which may combat existing inequalities, but may also undermine the *equality of status* that Marshall saw as constitutive for social citizenship⁸⁹.

2. The salience of social pensions

To assess the salience of social pensions in the real world one has to go beyond the analysis of the “paper reality” of social rights (cf. Van Oorshot 2012) and look at benefit reciprocity, which translate paper rights into social reality. After this is done a final section will look at the salience of social pension in terms of expenditure and relate the welfare effort spend on social pensions to national wealth and look at changes in welfare effort during the last ten years to identify parametric reforms.

2.1. Beneficiaries

The salience of social pensions, which can be seen in the proportion of beneficiaries to the total population of the target group⁹⁰, depends largely on its role in the overall system of income security in old age in a country. Are they the primary source of income security in old age or is a majority covered by social insurance programs? Are the benefits available to anyone in need?

Universal schemes always serve as the basis of income security in old age and as such are fundamental for income security in old age. They follow the Beveridgean logic of providing a minimum income based on citizenship rather than on need.

⁸⁸ This trait of Nepal’s social pension reflects the ethnicized nature of the overall configuration of social cash transfers: There’s a separate scheme for “indigenous people” and universal coverage of Dalit children under its child grant transfer.

⁸⁹ However inequalities are transformed into “issues of citizenship”, which renders them the object of political action: “Given substantial citizenship at a national scale, inequalities by gender, race, national origin, recency of arrival in the territory, employment, income, and welfare become issues of citizenship. In practice, all states compromise citizenship significantly in two way: 1) by distinguishing among categories and degrees of citizenship that imply different rights, obligations, and relations to authorities; 2) by advertising as general rights and obligations arrangements that actually differ significantly in their applicability to various segments of the state’s subject population.” (Tilly 2005: 192)

⁹⁰ To ensure comparability the target group of social pensions is assumed to be those aged 65 and above. As such the beneficiary rates are *not* coverage rates, but rather measure the salience of social pensions among a certain segment of the population. When the age of eligibility is low this can lead to beneficiary rates above 100% even when coverage is not universal. Since the study is interested in comparing the way minimum incomes are institutionalized for the elderly in countries of the global South, this measure is preferred over coverage rates. However sometimes benefit reciprocity data includes other target groups of the social pensions, e.g. disabled, in those cases the number of beneficiary will be overstated. This is the case for: ARM, BRB, CPV, CRI, DOM, MNG, TLS URY. In other cases it’s unknown whether other target groups are included: AZE, BRN, DZA, EGY, KAZ, KGZ. Whether or not this has a huge impact on data quality depends on the set up of the overall pension system. The social pensions in the post-Soviet republics served mostly as a benefit for people that were disabled from birth on.

Means- and pension-tested programs can fulfill different roles depending on the protectiveness of social insurance in a country. When the coverage of social insurance programs is high and benefits are adequate, the salience of a social pension will be low (Bahle et al. 2011: 167-9) emphasizing the residual rather than the fundamental character of these programs. When social insurance protection is lacking for a majority of the population, as is the case in many countries included in the study, pension-tested programs will serve as the main source of income security for a majority of the elderly population. Means-tested social pensions however will vary according to the nature of their means-test, either providing a minimum income to all persons in need or targeting only the neediest. While the former programs will exhibit a high salience, the latter will show low salience, which probably exists alongside unmet need.

Beneficiaries	Social security contributions (% of revenue)				
	0-5%	5-10%	10-20%	20-30%	>30%
<20%	GTM, DOM		ARM	BRA, URY	FRA, DEU, ESP, PRT
20-60%	IND, BRB, COL	CHL		IRL, GBR	CRI
60-100%	THA		KOR		
>100%	ZAF				

Table 7: Beneficiaries & Social insurance protectiveness

Source: FLOORCASH Database – principal investigator: L. Leisering; EuMin Database (Hubl/Bahle 2013); Population and social security revenue data from World Development Indicators 2013

Because data on the “protectiveness filters” (Bahle et al. 2011: 27) of social insurance in the countries was not collected, a systematic inquiry into the relation between the protectiveness of social insurance and the salience of MIP is not possible. Using “Social Contributions (as % of revenue)”⁹¹, which is only available for few countries, as a very rough proxy for the protectiveness of social insurance in a country (Table 7), the expected results can be seen for the social pensions in European countries⁹²: Lower social security contributions accompany higher beneficiary numbers (cf. Bahle et al. 2011: 35-41). In the developing world the relationship shows more variation. As expected countries that collect more social contributions (>20%) show a lower salience of social pensions. Lower (5-20%) social contributions may either be sufficient to grant social rights based on contributions and leave few reliant on means-/pension-tested benefits (Armenia) or may be complemented with social pensions that target a significant part of the elderly population (South Korea). Very low (0-5%) social insurance protectiveness, may either be counterbalanced by a high salience of means-/pension-tested benefits (Thailand, South Africa) or may not be compensated by social pensions.

These different combinations may explain some of the variation seen in Table 8. Pension-tested programs are notably less salient in the post-Soviet republics, because accrued rights to contributory benefits are widespread. In countries with less developed contributory programs these programs are not a residual but an integral part of income security, providing minimum incomes to the vast majority not covered by social insurance. In Le-

⁹¹ The WDI database provides data on “Social Contributions (as % of revenue)” for a few countries, which we will use as a proxy of social insurance protectiveness in the following analysis. Generalizations based on this data should be treated with care.

⁹² Beneficiary numbers of European means-tested social pensions (Bahle/Pfeifer 2013).

sotho, Thailand and the Maldives a majority of the elderly population is secured by these programs.

General means-tests perform the same function – excluding the wealthy – through their income thresholds and also provide benefits to sizeable parts of the population.

	Recipients		Means-Tested		
	Universal	Pension-Tested	General Means-Test	Minimum Standard	Poverty-Tested Selective Poverty Targeting
<20%		TJK BHS ARM UZB KGZ PER		ARG URY BRA TUR	DOM MOZ MYS KEN DZA SLV IDN PHL PRY ATG GTM
20%-60%	KIR NPL	MEX VCT PAN BRB MNG	CHL	VEN CRI	OMN BLZ EGY ECU IND COL BGD
60%-100%	WSM	LSO THA MDV	KOR	TTO	CPV
>100%	GUY BWA TLS MUS KAZ GEO BOL NAM SUR BRN SYC		ZAF SWZ		

Table 8: Beneficiaries & type of resource test

Source: FLOORCASH Database – principal investigator: L. Leisering; Population data from World Development Indicators 2013

Among the poverty-tested social pensions, there's considerable variation, which cannot be fully explained by the protectiveness of social insurance in these countries. While it is plausible to assume that other pensions act as the only “kind of filter” (Bahle et al. 2011: 167) in case of the minimum standard pensions in Latin America⁹³, the Caribbean and

⁹³ E.g. Brazil provides two other pensions at the minimum wage level, one aimed at informal rural workers and one as a minimum pension within the contributory system.

Turkey, the “selective poverty targeting” of social pensions in developing countries acts as a *second* filter reducing the salience of social pensions.

A *third* kind of “filter” is the high qualifying age in some countries, which affects all types of social pensions and explains the low salience in terms of beneficiaries of some universal social pensions. A combination of a lack of other filters, high poverty rates among the elderly and a low qualifying age may explain the unusually high number of recipients in Cape Verde.

Countrycode	Beneficiaries
ARG	0,94%
BRA	12,03%
CRI	29,04%
URY	16,90%
VEN	39,48%
TTO	68,14%
TUR	15,26%
DEU	3,47%
ESP	3,35%
FRA	5,42%
PRT	1,78%
GBR	25,16%
IRL	20,33%

Table 9: Social pension beneficiaries in the EU & the developing world

Source: FLOORCASH Database – principal investigator: L. Leisering; EuMin Database (Hubl/Bahle 2013); Population data from World Development Indicators 2013

Compared to the European countries (Table 9) a much higher salience of social pensions can be observed in the developing world. Not only do universal pensions provide main source of income security for elderly in some smaller countries, a model that has been falling out of favour among European states (Goedemé 2012: 109; Leisering/Barrientos 2013), but also do pension- and means-tested programs play a much larger role. This can be seen when comparing the generous minimum standard social pensions, which are institutionally most similar to the continental European social pensions, with the latter. Compared to the beneficiary numbers of continental European states’ MIP for the elderly population (Table 9), with the exception of Argentina the social pensions providing a “minimum standard”, are much more salient and as such are an integral part of income security policies in these countries. Even compared to the Anglophone countries, in which MIP often fulfills an “insurance substitute function” (Bahle et al. 2011: 224), the schemes in Costa Rica, Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago show a higher salience, indicating that they substitute insurance for more than a third of the population. This provides further evidence to the assertion that non-contributory benefits, if they are rights-based, play a fundamental role in income security policies in the developing world.

2.2. Expenditure

Expenditure of social pensions can be interpreted as another indicator of a program’s sali-

ence. Set into relation to different reference parameters, expenditure data can highlight different aspects of a social pension's role within a country. Using GDP as a reference, expenditure acts as a proxy for welfare effort in relation to national wealth. Because expenditure is also driven by the size of the target populations, the share of the population age 65 and older has to be taken into account when analyzing this data⁹⁴.

A second use of expenditure data is to identify changes and parametric reforms during the last ten years. To this end changes in per capita real social expenditure (cf. Hicks/Zorn 2005) on social pensions will be analyzed. This indicator uses needs-adjusted, i.e. corrected for the size of the target population, real, i.e. corrected for inflation, expenditure and as such documents how much spending on social pensions per person age 65 and above increases in real terms. It is not affected by changes in the economic situation, but reflects changes that most likely originate in policy changes⁹⁵.

Besides the indicated difficulties in interpretation, expenditure data itself is to be treated carefully, because data sources differ in what constitutes expenditure. Some include administrative and other costs of social pensions, others just add up the value of transfers.

a) Expenditure and need

In Figure 5 expenditure is plotted against the share of the population age 65 and above. The plot contains two findings: One minor, one rather significant. First, as expected, expenditure as a fraction of national wealth rises with the size of the target-group. While the extent of the three filter analyzed in the last section as well as the benefit level do cause some variation in expenditure, generally a higher share of elderly is accompanied by a greater welfare effort on social pensions. But – and this is the second and more significant finding – two groups can clearly be identified.

The first, located at the bottom of the diagram, spend less on social pensions in relation to their share in the population. This may be caused by very different reasons: Low benefit levels, a high protectiveness of social insurance and the selectiveness of the social pension itself or a high level of national wealth, which affects the reference parameter. Compared with the findings of the last sections some marked differences can be observed. Korea and Thailand, whose social pension displayed a high salience in terms of beneficiaries, are firmly located in the group of low expenditures related to target-group size. Even though both cover sizeable parts of their elderly population using non-contributory pensions, the welfare effort spent on these transfers is rather small. In both cases this is probably mainly an effect of low benefit levels measured as a fraction of national income or average wages. The “minimum standard” social pensions of the Latin America’s “advanced social policy regimes” are all also found in this group, but for opposite reasons: They provide high benefits for those not covered by social insurance programs. Costa Rica’s non-contributory pension is especially notable, because even though it covers sizeable parts of the population, it is among those with a low expenditure, perhaps because it only pays out “the difference between a recipient’s own resources and the official social minimum” (Bahle et al. 2011: 181). A similar difference can be observed in Oman: Even though the social pension covers 28,8% of the elderly population and provides benefits that are high

⁹⁴ Just like benefit reciprocity data, this may sometimes be exaggerated by the fact that benefits to target groups other than the elderly are included in the expenditure data. This is the case for: ARG, ECU, GEO, MOZ, BRB, CRI, MNG, TLS, URY. It’s not known whether such benefits are included in the following countries: AZE, DZA, EGY, KGZ. Expenditure for GEO includes employment-related benefits, which raise the basic pension of 80GEL/month to a maximum of 90GEL/month.

⁹⁵ They may also reflect changes in take-up rates among the target-population.

in absolute terms, measured against national wealth, which is driven by oil revenues, the expenditure is tiny. Nepal's and Botswana's universal pensions spend more in relation to the size of the target-group, but are still closer to the group of countries with a low expenditure, even though their pensions are universal benefits. Both however are meager in relative and absolute terms reducing costs.

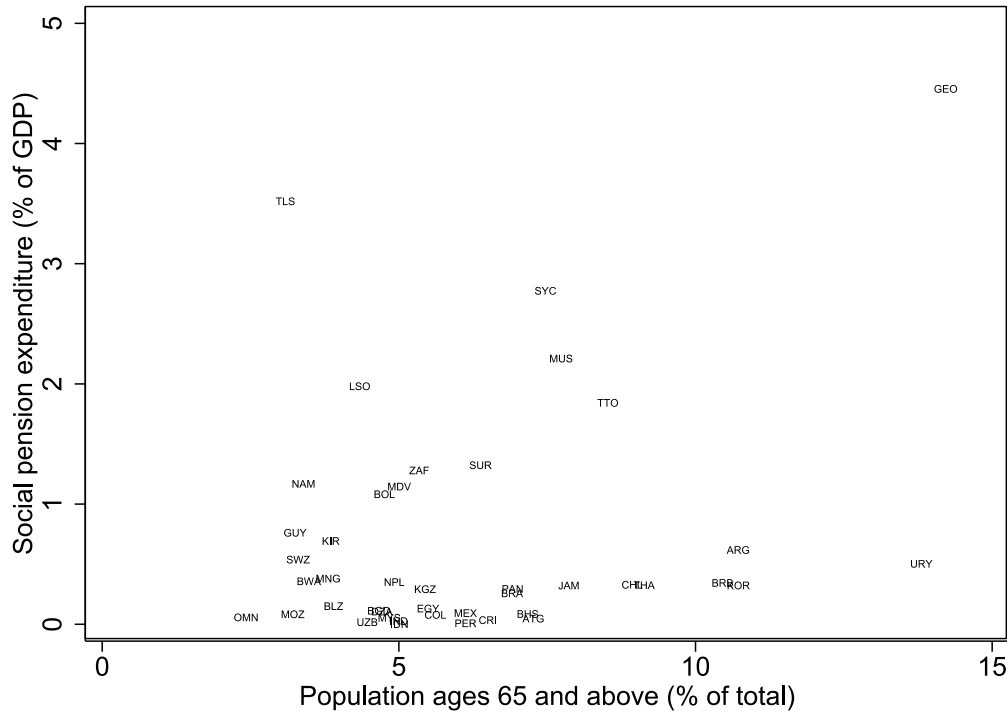


Figure 5: Social pension expenditure & population ages 65 and above

Source: FLOORCASH Database – principal investigator: L. Leisering; Population data from World Development Indicators 2013

The second group consists of countries that exhibit a much higher ratio of welfare effort and target group-size. It consists mostly of the smaller countries with universal social pensions and the pension- or means-tested social pension that form the main pillar of South Africa's and Lesotho's pension system. Trinidad and Tobago is somewhat of an anomaly in this group. As a minimum standard social pension it is institutionally more similar to its Latin American counterparts, but its income-test is set at a high level and exhibits a high salience. In all these countries the social pension can be assumed to serve as the backbone of the pension system providing income security to a majority of the elderly population.

So while it is possible to delineate between encompassing social pensions, that include a majority of the population and spend a comparatively more of their GDP on them, from residual social pensions, which do not, it is not always possible to specify the reasons why the latter is the case. Low expenditures indicating a residual role of social pensions must not indicate a lack of social citizenship rights.

b) Changes in per capita real expenditure

To identify policy reforms, changes in real per elderly (65 and above) social pension spending (cf. Hicks/Zorn 2005), from year t in 1, 2 or 3 years using thresholds of over 40% change in 1 year and a non negative 2 year change to filter short term fluctuations or

over 90% change in 3 years were used. Consecutive phases of expansion were identified as starting in the year in which expansion is first visible in both short-term (1 year) and long term (3 years) change. Thresholds were selected with help of case knowledge and should only capture events that signify a significant extension of pension entitlements in either quantity (beneficiaries) or quality (benefit levels). However since expenditure data is lacking for many years in many countries this list may be incomplete. Furthermore, because expenditure data in the database starts only 2001, changes before 2001 could not be identified.

Change in real per elderly spending in				
Country	Year	1 year	2 years	3 years
MNG	2005	46%	72%	92%
ARG	2006	56%	110%	193%
BLZ	2007	91%	81%	50%
BRA	2003	31%	63%	101%
CRI	2006	60%	124%	145%
ECU	2006	94%	104%	126%
TTO	2010	41%		
BGD	2003	117%	186%	225%
IND	2005	84%	183%	211%

Table 10: Social pensions with significant changes in spending per elderly (2001-2011)

Source: FLOORCASH Database – principal investigator: L. Leisering

The first finding is that no retrenchments or expenditure cuts could be identified from 2001 till 2011. Small fluctuations occur, possibly due to benefit levels not keeping up with inflation, but no significant decrease in spending is identified. Nine reforms in the opposite direction, which indicate a massive expansion of social pensions, could be identified though. These can be located in Latin American and Caribbean countries, South Asia and Mongolia.

Argentina, Brazil and Costa Rica all expanded their social pensions, at least doubling real expenditure in three years starting in 2003 and 2006 respectively. Huber/Stephens (2010: 178-9) explain this development as being part of a shift towards “basic universalism”, which the left governments under Kirchner, Lula and Arias in these countries undertook following the turn of the century. They do however also name one global factor, citing the publication of the World Bank conference paper “Rethinking Pension Reform: Ten Myths about Social Security Systems” by Joseph Stiglitz and Peter Orszag as an “important symbolic milestone” (ibid.: 177). Politics may be theorized to also have played a role in the extension of Ecuador’s and Trinidad & Tobago’s social pensions, both being undertaken under center-left governments led by Correa resp. Manning.

The South Asian social pensions of India and Bangladesh underwent an even more massive expansion, more than tripling in real expenditure in three years. Mongolia’s change was more modest with a 92% increase in three years starting in 2005.

This global expansion of existing social pensions since 2003 can also be interpreted as further circumstantial evidence, that global diffusion processes as argued in section III have been driving a wave of adoption and expansion of social pensions since the early 2000s. Even authors such as Huber/Stephens, which cast the story in a different light by highlighting politics and the withering attractiveness of the neo-liberal agenda, ascribe

changes in policy models among global organizations at least a symbolic role. Not only has a diverse set of countries been increasingly adopting social pensions, but existing social pensions have also been massively expanded.

3. Conclusion

The previous sections analyzed indicators of the rights and salience of social pensions. To sum up the diverse findings, two further analyses will be done: One confronts the question whether or not social pensions in the developing world institutionalize the social right to a minimum income, the other whether the empirical patterns of the single dimensions display elective affinities, i.e. fall into clusters, which could be identified to represent types of social pensions.

3.1. The social rights of social pensions

The answer to the first question is not easily given, because social rights are not a question of present or not, but of degree. For this kind of question a fuzzy set analysis is fitting because it allows us to investigate the degree, to which a country falls into the set of countries guaranteeing the right to a minimum income (cf. Ragin 2000; first applied in welfare state research: Kvist 1999). As opposed to conventional methods of constructing indices, fuzzy set methods conceive cases as configurations of dimensions, which themselves are not treated as quantitative indicators, but as memberships in sets, i.e. as qualitative traits. The combination of memberships locates cases within a property space. The construction of the property space is driven “by theoretical and substantive knowledge” (Kvist 1999: 234), which identifies the core traits of the ideal typical concept. The three indicators of social rights already presented, qualifying conditions and benefit levels, are used to construct the property space of the ideal-type of “social right to a minimum income in old age”, then membership to the corresponding sets⁹⁶ is assigned according to qualitative criteria or using the “direct method” of calibration proposed by Ragin⁹⁷ (2008: Ch. 5):

1. Long period of coverage: The period of coverage is assumed to play a pivotal role in realizing citizenship rights. This corresponds to the “*participation*” dimension of social rights identified by Leisering/Barrientos (2013), because only if people can receive the benefit for a significant amount of time “common activities in markets, politics and civil society” (ibid.) are feasible. Because this dimension is largely dependent on the average life expectancy in a country (see section N), instead of the qualifying age – a purely institutional characteristic – the average years covered by social pensions is used on the indicator level. When a country provides more than fifteen years of coverage on average it is considered to be fully in the set of countries with a long period of coverage. The crossover point is set at ten years. Only when a country provides less than zero years, i.e. the life expectancy lies below the qualifying age, is it considered fully out.

⁹⁶ Three “qualitative anchors” (Ragin 2008: 90) are of special importance for set membership: When does a case qualify as fully in the set (value 1.0), when as fully out (0) and when as neither/nor (0.5). As opposed to purely quantitative methods the transformation into fuzzy set membership scores from quantitative indicators is not a simple standardization procedure, but is inherently confronted with the question what different values of the indicators *mean* in term of set membership.

⁹⁷ The direct method of calibration transforms interval-scale variables into fuzzy sets by assigning membership scores according to the three qualitative anchors outlined in the previous footnote, which have to be chosen as quantitative anchors by the researcher guided by theoretical and empirical considerations.

2. (Need) universal benefits: When social pensions are granted unconditionally (i.e. universal), they realize the “*recognition*” dimension of social rights, because the claimant is recognized as a “full member of the community”, and as such is guaranteed a minimum income. Benefits that are pension-/means-tested also fulfill this criteria, if a social minimum is guaranteed to anybody falling below the threshold set by this minimum, rendering them “need universal” (Leisering 2008: 95)⁹⁸. Selective poverty-tests fall short of this criteria, because they restrict access in ways that are not purely based on an assessment of resources and decouple the resource-tests from benefit levels. Because benefits using such selective poverty tests are quite diverse (and information on the exact procedures are lacking) they are all treated as neither fully in nor fully out of the set of (need) universal benefits⁹⁹.

3. Benefits above the poverty-threshold: The “*resource*” dimension is decisive for the social right to a minimum income, because it decides whether at least the “minimalist” notion of social citizenship - a “modicum of income and security” - is realized. For this analysis we treat this minimalist notion as an absolute minimum, which suggest the international i\$2/day poverty line as delineating full membership and the i\$1.25/day line as delineating the crossover point between more in and more out of the set of countries providing “benefits above the poverty-threshold”¹⁰⁰.

An ideal-typical social right to a minimum income would thus guarantee an income above the international poverty line of i\$2/month for fifteen years (on average). All three dimensions together are necessary and sufficient to fully realize the social right to a minimum income. This embodies a minimalist and absolute conception of social citizenship, which is thus inherently global. All countries are measured according to the same absolute standards. Using fuzzy sets the membership in this combination of sets can be evaluated using the minimum principle, which corresponds to the logical “and” (Ragin 2000: 173; Goertz 2006: 43). What is measured in this combination is - to put it differently - the degree to which a nation state takes responsibility for the well-being of its elderly population in monetary terms according to a global standard of social citizenship¹⁰¹.

⁹⁸ Leisering (2008) uses the category synonymously to “target person universal” to characterize social assistance regimes, which guarantee a minimum income to the whole population. Here the term is used in a slightly different way emphasizing the *guarantee* of a minimum income within a target group.

⁹⁹ Besides those caveats, which are driven by the analytical perspective of social citizenship, international actors have been voicing concern whether certain types of means-testing undermine the realization of human rights (e.g. OHCHR 2012: 27-9).

¹⁰⁰ As in the analysis of benefit levels this does not take into account benefit sharing within households, which is common in the global South.

¹⁰¹ This “global standard” is only analytic in that it’s not on the agenda of global organizations. The OHCHR (2010) call for benefits to be “high enough to enable older people to enjoy an adequate standard of living”, the ILO recommendation on social protection floors (2012) calls for “basic income security, at least at a nationally defined minimum level, for older persons.” The analysis, however, applies a *global* definition of poverty by another organization, the World Bank, and thus is not guided purely by scholarly wishful thinking. The complex interrelationship of *global standards* and *national responsibility*, which shows up in these phrases and conceptual tensions, should come more into the focus of sociologically informed research on global social policy. “Layered citizenship” (Davy 2013) may serve as a first conceptual approximation.

Dimension of social pension:	Long Period of Coverage			(Need) Universality			Benefits above the poverty-threshold		
Dimension of citizenship (Leisering/Barrientos 2013):	Participation			Recognition			Resources		
Indicator:	Coverage in years using life expectancy at age 60			Type of „conditions of circumstance“			Benefit Level in i\$		
Fuzzy set thresholds:	Out	Crossover	In	Out	Crossover	In	Out	Crossover	In
	0 years	10 years	15 years	N/A	Selective poverty targeting	Universal, Pension-tested, General Means-test, minimum standard	0i\$/month	38i\$/month	61i\$/month

Table 11: Dimensions of the social right to a minimum income in old age

Looking at the results in Figure 6, which shows the degree of membership in each dimension's set (shaded bars) as well as the membership in the combined concept (black bar). Of the 64 countries included in the analysis, 21 are more out than in the set of countries that provide a social right, 9 are neither in nor out and 34 are more in than out. Countries with social pensions that fall more out of the set of countries providing a social right, are either falling short in the dimension of benefits – India, Bangladesh, Mozambique, Tajikistan, China, Vietnam, Thailand etc. – or in the dimension of the period of coverage – Antigua and Barbuda, Indonesia, Kiribati. Three countries fall short in both respects – the Philippines, Nepal and the Dominican Republic. It is notable that a majority of countries can be considered either almost fully or fairly out¹⁰² of the set. Only Kiribati and Armenia are just more or less out and could be lifted into the group of countries more in than out with few parametric reforms.

Being neither in nor out (0.5) is solely due to being categorized as employing selective poverty targeting as analyzed above. More knowledge of the targeting mechanisms and an accompanying recalibration of the dimension “(target-person) universality” would probably lift some of these countries into the set of social rights provision. Most of them are mostly in the sets representing the other two dimensions.

Of the countries that are above the crossover threshold most are almost fully and a few fully in the set of countries providing a social right. Using the criteria outlined above, once passing the crossover of being more in than out, the almost full membership in the set of countries providing a social right is reached frequently. On the one hand this is of course due to the minimalist concept of social citizenship applied here. On the other hand this conceptualization has shown quite a big discriminatory power. Except for the countries with selective poverty targeting, whose position could be improved through better data and operationalization of the respective dimension, countries either fall into the set of almost full or full membership or fairly to fully out of the ideal type of the “social right to a minimum income”. Even though social rights are a matter of degree, in the real world few countries inhabit the grey-zone.

¹⁰² For an overview over the verbal representation of membership scores see Kvist (1999: 236) and Ragin (2000: 156).

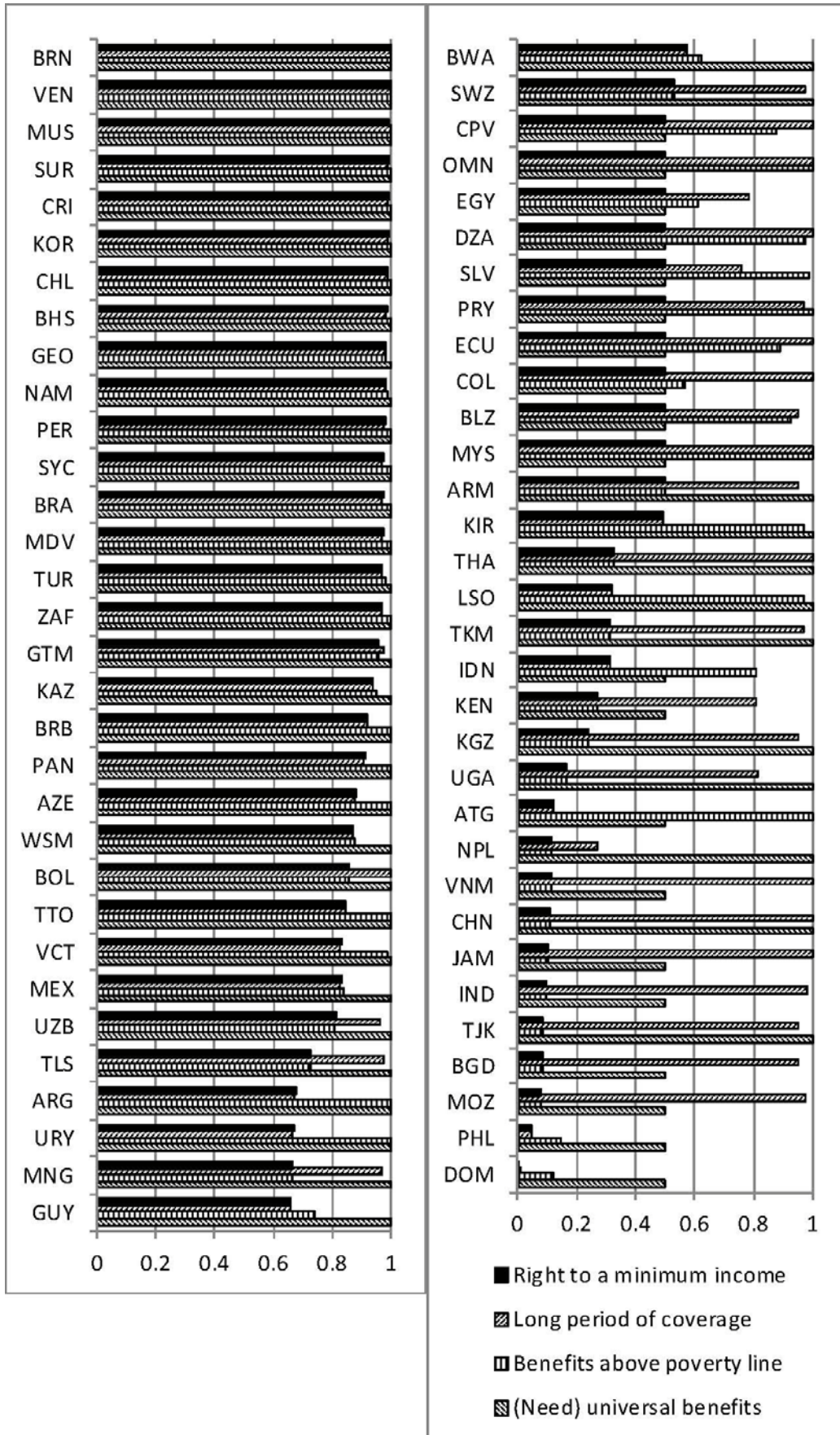


Figure 6: Social rights of social pensions fuzzy set analysis
 Source: FLOORCASH Database – principal investigator: L. Leisering

3.2. The types of social pensions

When plotting the social rights membership scores against beneficiary numbers (Figure 7) to get a first insight into the relation between the degree of social rights and the salience of social pensions, an upper left triangular plot appears, which indicates that a high salience of social pensions complements membership to the ideal type, but not vice-versa. As explained before a low salience must not indicate a lack of social rights, but may also be caused by the presence of highly protective systems of income security at higher tiers.

To find out whether there are affinities beyond this relation a cluster analysis is applied. The purpose of cluster analysis is identifying cases with similar traits among multiple characteristics by minimizing difference of cases within a cluster and maximizing difference between clusters. In this analysis hierarchical cluster analysis is applied, which starts with each case forming its own cluster, which are then joined pair wise increasing clusters step by step.

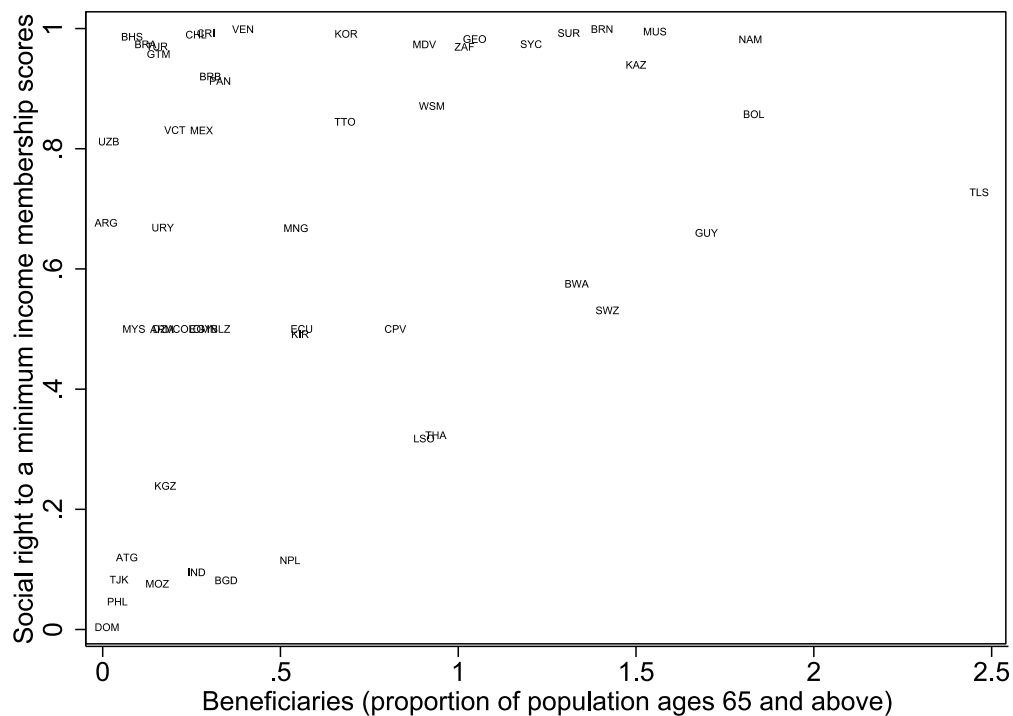


Figure 7: Social rights of social pensions & beneficiaries

Source: FLOORCASH Database – principal investigator: L. Leisering; Population data from World Development Indicators 2013

The analysis uses the following three indicators.

1. Social right to a monetary minimum: The indicator developed above is used to represent benefit levels and qualifying conditions of social pensions from a perspective of global social citizenship¹⁰³. It captures whether or not a country guarantees its citizens a minimum income in old age at the level of international standards of poverty.

¹⁰³ It should be noted that using fuzzy set membership scores as an “indicator” in further quantitative analysis certainly goes against the intent of those who call for their increased use in social science, because qualitative membership scores are conflated with quantitative indicators (see Ragin 2008).

2. Saliency of social pension: The saliency is measured as the number of beneficiaries relative to the population aged 65 and above.

3. Needs-adjusted welfare effort: The spending on social pensions is included as a “needs-adjusted” (van Oorshot 2012) proportion of GDP. This represents the expenditure per person in target group as a % of GDP per capita (cf. Lynch 2007).

Compared to the cluster analysis applied by Bahle et al. (2011) and Gough (2001) to identify clusters of social assistance regimes in Europe resp. the OECD, which used six resp. five variables in their analysis, this analysis is fairly modest. It is however not geared towards classifying “MIP systems” or “social assistance regimes”, but just a single program, social pensions, which operates within a wider framework of both contributory and non-contributory transfers, and includes more countries than both authors.

Both studies also include two measures of generosity, which this analysis omits, which is justifiable given the focus on the social right to a minimum and the fact that it is represented in a) absolute terms in the indicator of social rights and b) in the needs-adjusted welfare effort, because higher benefits relative to national wealth should be expressing themselves in higher expenditures.

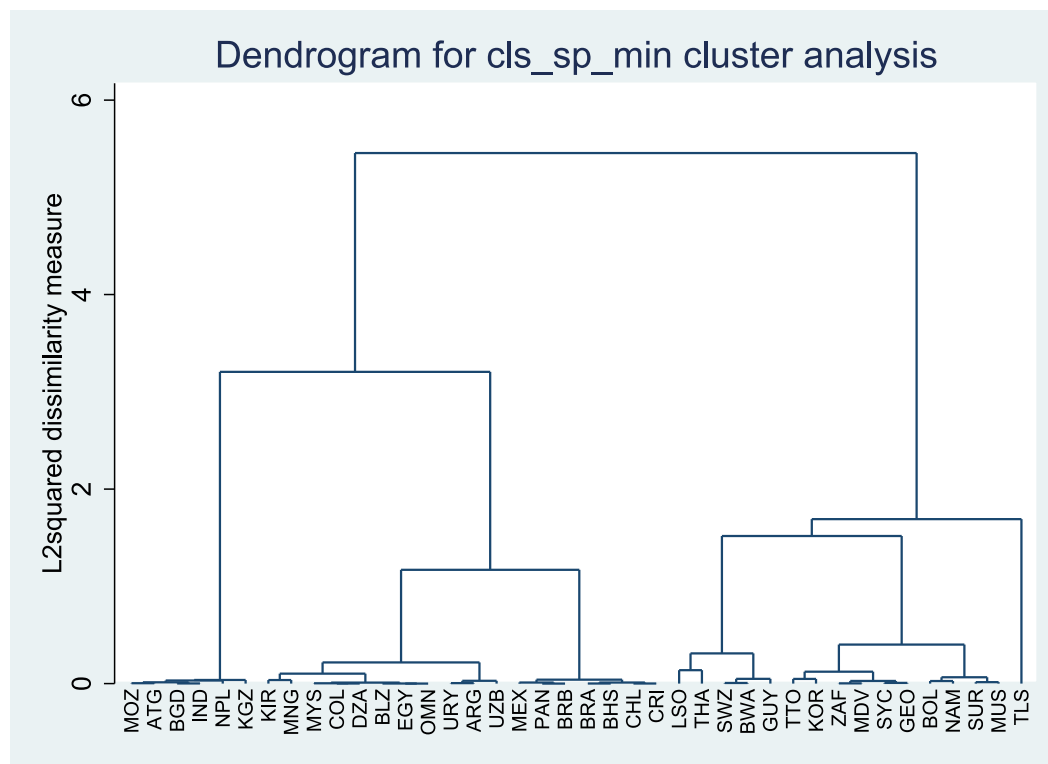


Figure 8: Dendrogram of hierarchical cluster analysis using ward linkage

Source: FLOORCASH Database – principal investigator: L. Leisering

Because cluster analysis is sensitive towards the scaling of variables the indicators for expenditures and beneficiaries were standardized between 0 and 1 (cf. Bahle et al. 2011: 220). Figure 8 shows the result of a ward cluster analysis using the squared euclidian distance measure. Other types of linkage algorithms yield similar results. Timor Leste is difficult to classify for all algorithms indicating its distinct quality. Lesotho and Thailand, which form a cluster in the solution depicted in figure 8, join other clusters relatively late using the single-linkage algorithm. South Korea is another country, which changes its affiliation in the single- and average-linkage solutions joining the cluster of Latin American and Caribbean states (Mexico, Panama, Chile, Brazil etc.) instead of the cluster domi-

nated by encompassing social pensions (South Africa, Maldives, Seychelles, Georgia). Except for these changes and the outlier Timor Leste five groups can easily be identified in all solutions and remain highly consistent across solutions even when benefit generosity is added to the analysis¹⁰⁴.

Cluster 1 consists of Kiribati, Mongolia, Malaysia, Colombia, Algeria, Belize, Egypt, Oman, Uzbekistan, Argentina and Uruguay. It is by far the most heterogeneous group of countries, consisting of countries, which are mostly neither fully in nor fully out of the set of countries providing a right to minimum income, more than half of them due to the nature of their means test¹⁰⁵. They cover a quarter of their elderly populations and spend relatively little (4.63% of GDP/capita per person in target group) on average. These countries feature mostly residual means-tested social pensions, which for different reasons provide only insufficient social rights. Uzbekistan, Argentina and Uruguay join the cluster only later differing primarily in higher social rights scores¹⁰⁶.

Cluster	Social right to a minimum income (membership scores)	Expenditure per person ages 65 and above (% of GDP/capita)	Beneficiaries (proportion of population ages 65 and above)
1	0.12	3.09%	0.26
2	0.57	4.63%	0.24
3	0.94	2.59%	0.24
4	0.48	19.82%	1.26
5	0.96	24.63%	1.21
6	0.73	113.92%	2.46

Average values

Table 12: Description of clusters

Source: FLOORCASH Database – principal investigator: L. Leisering

The countries in cluster 2 – Bahamas, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Barbados, Panama, Mexico – display less heterogeneity. All countries are located in Latin America and the Caribbean, display a high scores in the social rights dimension, similar beneficiary levels to cluster 1 but at lower expenditures, indicating that these countries feature residual social pensions, which guarantee a social minimum to about a quarter of the elderly population.

The countries in cluster 3 are similar in beneficiary numbers and expenditures to those in cluster 2, but lack the provision of a right to a minimum income, which characterized the countries of cluster 2. Kyrgyzstan, Antigua and Barbuda, Mozambique, Bangladesh,

¹⁰⁴ These three countries also change their association, when benefit generosity measured as a proportion of GNI per capita is added to the cluster analysis. As pointed out perviously, relative and absolute benefit generosity these countries display a marked difference in their rankings when looking at absolute or relative benefit levels.

¹⁰⁵ When including benefit generosity and excluding the index of social rights in the analysis this cluster disappears completely. Of all the clusters it is the closest to being an analytical artifact rather than a proper cluster of countries with similar social pensions.

¹⁰⁶ This difference becomes even more apparent when adding benefit generosity to the analysis.

India and Nepal cover varying but sizable parts of their population with their social pensions, but either fail to lift recipients out of extreme poverty or only provide benefits for a few number of years.

Cluster 4 – South Korea, Trinidad and Tobago, Georgia, Seychelles, Maldives, South Africa, Bolivia, Namibia, Suriname, Mauritius – consists of countries, which provide universal or close to universal coverage, either by design or through generous means-tests (South Korea, South Africa, Trinidad & Tobago, Maldives) and high expenditures. These schemes can be assumed to operate at the core of their country’s system of income security in old age and provide a high degree of rights to a minimum income.

Cluster 5 – Thailand, Lesotho, Guyana, Botswana, Swaziland – is similar in regard to the salience of the social pension, but at slightly lower levels of expenditure and significantly lower levels of social rights, which often do not lift recipients out of poverty. These countries do provide universal or almost universal coverage, but

Cluster 6 consists of only one country, Timor Leste, which stands out because its universal social pension has a very high number of beneficiaries and incredibly high expenditure, which outnumbers *total* expenditure on elderly in all OECD countries¹⁰⁷ (cf. Lynch 2006: 21). It only joins the cluster of countries with a high salience of social pensions (4 and 5) at a later stage. Clusters 1, 2 and 3 are later joined and form a cluster of social pensions with low salience.

This brief analysis indicates that salience and the quality of social rights are the main dimensions among which the cluster analysis discriminates countries. The clusters with a low salience show remarkably similar beneficiary rates, averaging around the 25% mark, varying only in welfare effort, i.e. expenditure as a proportion of GDP. The clusters of countries with a high salience feature much higher numbers of beneficiaries and expenditure. The clusters can additionally be differentiated into roughly three groups regarding the social right to a minimum income: One cluster is characterized by a lack of this right, two are somewhat in between and two fulfill the criteria presented above (section N) completely and thus qualify as providing the social right to a minimum income. Thus the distribution of cases in clusters reflects the distribution of membership scores in the last section. It is complemented by the distinction between high and low salience social pensions. Of these six possible combinations five are found in the analyzed social pensions: No country has institutionalized an extensive social pension, which does not at least somewhat guarantee the right to a minimum income in old age.

But the affinities discovered in the analysis, represented by the five clusters, do neither reflect different principles of distribution nor geographical proximity, which could help in identifying clear-cut “families of nations”. The clusters in itself exhibit considerable variance when looking beyond the indicators included in the analysis. Cluster 4, which is characterized by a high degree of a social right to a minimum income and high salience of social pensions, does not feature *universal* social pensions exclusively. South Africa, South Korea, Trinidad & Tobago and the Maldives provide their minimum income based on need rather than a citizenship-based principle of equality of provision. Different ideological underpinnings, which are often regarded as explanatory with regards to the principles of distribution dominating social policy in a country, may lead to similar outcomes in terms of rights and the salience of social pensions in the global south. The “types” of social pensions presented here are thus not ideal-types, which represent institutional outcomes of certain principles of distribution linked with different ideologies. Social pensions

¹⁰⁷ This is partly due to the fact that the country’s GDP measures only a quarter of its GNI, so it might underestimate the country’s economic development considerably.

in the developing world do not cluster neatly around the dimensions, which are popular in the comparative welfare state literature¹⁰⁸ such as “institutionalism” or “corporativism” (Shalev 1996: 12). Different institutions can lead to similar empirical patterns in terms of salience and rights. While this does not rule out an influence of politics on the design of social pensions, it indicates that the politics of social pensions are lateral to the sociopolitical ideas, which shaped western welfare states (cf. Pelham 2007), and also different from the “agrarian” or “workerist” models of social policy, which dominated the developing world until the 1990s (Seekings 2012).

The “rediscovery” of non-contributory (including means-tested) benefits as a central instrument of social policy since can be conceived as the emergence of a new policy model for developing states, which has been termed “basic universalism” (Huber/Stephens 2012) or a transformation of “pauperist welfare” into social citizenship (Seekings 2012). These analyses trace the roots of this new model of social policy to democratization, party competition and new class coalitions. They overlook what has been pointed out in section III: That social pensions became a global model championed by international organizations and INGOs and that an increasing commitment to global norms of collective responsibility is also driving social pension adoption. Huber/Stephens even mention that “Unversalismo Básico” was put forward by the Inter-American Development Bank in a 2006 book, which connected targeting to social rights as a means of providing basic income support in Latin American societies (Huber/Stephens 2012: 177-8), but do not interpret it as a causal factor in its own right. While domestic politics do of course matter, the *availability* of global policy models has a considerable influence on how social problems are perceived and tackled.

V. Social pensions as a case of global social citizenship?

Two questions guided this thesis: What is driving the adoption of social pensions in the developing world and does the spread of social pensions in the developing world diffuse the right to a minimum income in old age. Taken together an overarching question becomes apparent: Are social pensions a case of global social citizenship (Davy/Davy/Leisering 2013)? This conclusion tries to answer this question through the identification of the central findings regarding *the global* and *social citizenship* in the analysis.

Regarding *social citizenship* it has become apparent that social pensions, whether universal or means-tested, play a fundamental role in providing the right to a minimum income in many countries of the developing world. In contexts of mostly informal labor, social rights that are contingent on citizenship or need are often more important than rights accrued through contributions. However important differences remain:

1. The *extend of social rights*, even when measured against a modest minimalist standard of social citizenship, realized by social pensions varies across countries. More than half (34) of the social pensions included in the study guarantee an income above the international poverty line for at least ten years on average. But almost as many (30) fall short of even such a minimalist conception of social citizenship. Benefits far below international poverty lines and/or a short timespan of reciprocity characterize 21 countries. It is doubtful whether such transfers realize a notion of “basic equality” according to the equal status as citizens. Nine countries fall short of this requirement for another reason. Their

¹⁰⁸ This is already the case when looking beyond the core systems of social insurance and at minimum income protection (Bahle 2011: 181, Gough et al. 1997: 37) in developed welfare states.

means-tests do not *guarantee* a minimum income but renders it contingent upon further mechanisms of selection. In how far this impairs the *social right* to a minimum income could not be assessed in detail in this study. Future comparative work on social policy in the developing world should further challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about the functioning of means-tested benefits: Neither do they automatically disqualify schemes as a social right nor do they automatically qualify schemes as guaranteeing a needs-tested minimum.

2. Minimum income protection programs in developed welfare states are at the same time residual and fundamental (Bahle et al. 2011). Social pensions often are – regardless whether they are universal or means-tested – *fundamental* (and not residual) in the social policy arrangement of their country: They provide the main source of retirement income for a majority of the elderly population and often the only kind of transfer income available to entire households¹⁰⁹. In 21 countries they provide benefits to over 60% proportional to the population aged 65 and above. And even where they are both *fundamental* and *residual*, in countries that provide protectiveness filters above their rights-based social pensions, the fraction of the population dependent on the social pension is comparable to those countries in Europe, whose minimum income protection systems provide “insurance substitute functions” (Bahle et al. 2011: 227). In countries, in which social pensions do not provide the right to a social minimum, they are sometimes just *residual*: Providing meager benefits to those assessed as being the neediest, *alleviating* the harshest forms of poverty rather than *defining* a minimum income in old age.

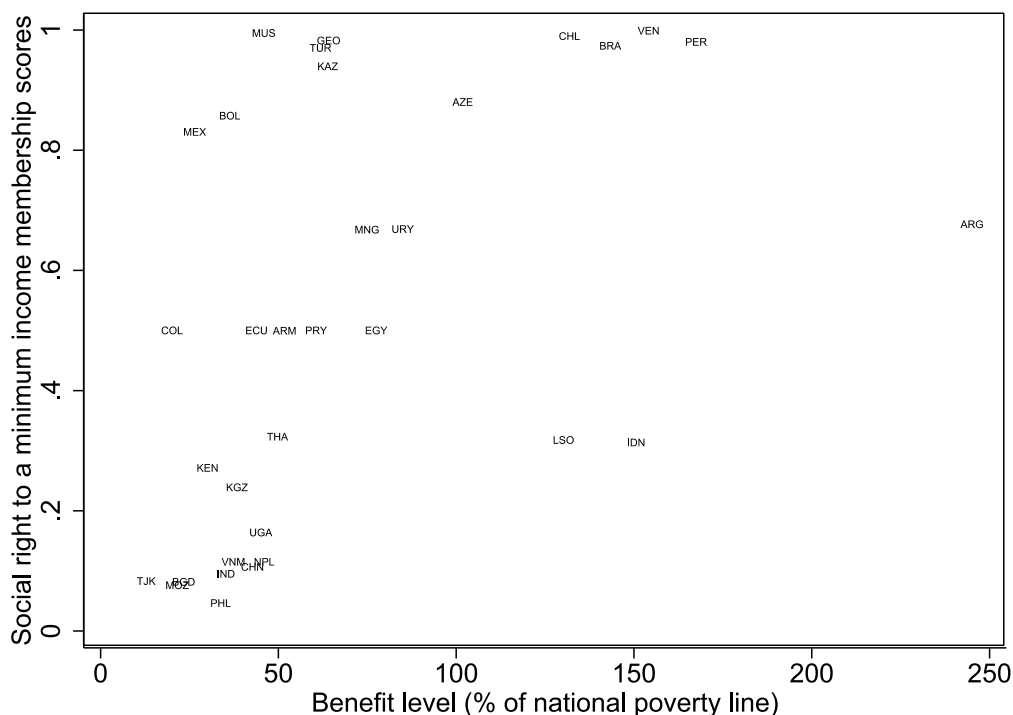


Figure 9: Social rights of social pensions & social pension adequacy

Source: FLOORCASH Database – principal investigator: L. Leisering; National poverty lines from Ravallion et al. 2008

¹⁰⁹ How this affects their character as individualized social rights has first been analyzed by Leisering/Barrientos (2013) and presents another question for future research.

3. But are these *social minima* as susceptible to the verdict of providing “equal but poor” (Myles 1984)¹¹⁰ benefits as flat-rate benefits were in the developing welfare states mid 20th century? When measured not against international but national poverty lines (see Figure 9), only eight countries of 33, for which data on national poverty lines is available, lift recipients above precisely this line. Even more so than minimum income protection schemes in Europe (Nelson 2011) social pensions seem to be geared towards realizing only a minimalist conception of social citizenship oriented at the “modicum of income and security” rather than the “life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society” (Marshall 1950: 11). When using wage levels rather than poverty lines as a measure for societal standards, this difference becomes even more pronounced¹¹¹.

The *Global* featured prominently in three ways:

1. The spread of social pensions was diagnosed as a global *phenomenon*, which started in the late 1990s and intensified during the last decade. Not only did social pension adoption increase, existing social pensions were expanded through parametric reforms and sometimes, as in India or Trinidad and Tobago, renamed to reflect political commitment to non-contributory benefits.

2. This spread was linked to global *processes of diffusion*, which were theorized as being caused by the changing contents of *world culture* (Meyer et al. 1997). Not only are nation states increasingly addressed as bearing the responsibility of granting their citizens social rights, social pensions are presented as a global model to fulfil this global responsibility enshrined in universal human rights. As the analysis showed the *adoption* of social pensions was not solely a product of parallel endogenous developments after the fall of the iron curtain, but also driven by an increased commitment to global norms of proper statehood with regards to the social rights of citizens. Beyond the adoption the qualifying age of social pensions showed considerable signs of mimetic isomorphism at least among states in the same region. *Decoupling*, another typical effect of diffusion caused by *culturally legitimated* models, could be observed in cases: Almost archetypical in the not implemented social pension legislation of the Dominican Republic and the high qualifying age present in the Philippines.

3. But not only the loose coupling of global norms, which promise the right to social security and an adequate standard of living, and local practices can serve as an explanation of the diversity observed among social pensions. The *global model* of social pensions itself is underspecified. All three dimensions identified by our analysis as decisive for the rights character of social pensions, benefit level, qualifying age and means-test, are not *prescribed* and not even *favoured* by international governmental agencies. The OHCHR (2010: 17) calls for adequate benefits without defining an absolute level or process of determining benefit adequacy. Another document by the independent expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty (Sepúlveda/Nyst 2012) displays a slight preference for universal programs without excluding targeted programs from realizing human rights. The criteria for determining the rights quality of social pensions applied in this study was not derived from the models of international actors, but synthesized from empirical knowledge and international poverty standards.

What does this tension between the global model of social pensions and the observed

¹¹⁰ Phrased almost as “relative equality among poverty” identical by Esping-Andersen (1990: 27) with regard to the liberal welfare state regime.

¹¹¹ Notable differences between social pensions like benefit levels measured against national standards or their position within a wider system of minimum income protection were only dealt with marginally. Further research in this direction could possibly identify similarities to the national trajectories of minimum income protection (Bahle et al. 2011: 201) found in Europe.

diversity among national social pensions tell us about the possible emergence of *global social citizenship*?

In absence of a world-state global social citizenship can not simply be conceived as “status bestowed on those who are full members of a community” (Marshall 1950: 28) for there may be “notions of cosmopolitan belonging” (Davy/Davy/Leisering 2013) but no global societal community, into which *individuals* could be included. The “equality of status”, which social citizenship realizes, still has its locus on the level of the *nation state* (cf. Stichweh 2000: 52). The global political system, termed “world polity” by John W. Meyer and others, does not treat individuals but “nation-states [as] constitutive citizens” (Meyer 1987: 50).

This juxtaposition of the political inclusion of individuals and nation-states sheds light on the nature of global social citizenship. Legitimate statehood is increasingly connected to the social rights of citizenship within the organizational frame of the world polity. But their realization and also their substantial content – ranging from the generosity of benefits to the social risks covered – are still mostly located at the national level¹¹². The emergence of global social citizenship should thus not be conceived as a dissolution of the distinct global and national logic of political inclusion, but a shift in the locus of specification of the social rights of citizenship. Social pensions add to the emergence of global social citizenship insofar they, as a global model, specify how the highly abstract principles of progress and individual rights (Meyer et al. 1997) are to be realized by nation states. This specification, however, does not annul what it specifies, inclusion into the national polity, which explains the ambiguous nature of the global model itself.

¹¹² Even the ILO recommendation No. 202 “concerning *National Floors of Social Protection*” (emphasis T.B.) calls for transfers at a “nationally defined minimum level”. Its development from a “global social floor to national SPFs” (Deacon 2013: 46) can be interpreted as an effect of this inclusion structure of world society.

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