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INTRODUCTION

Too much of what passes for theory and, indeed, empirical study of social policy remains dominated, defined and shaped by scholarship from and about the Global North. In this special issue, we argue for a much broader understanding of social welfare arrangements through a deliberate decentering of Northern and Western-Eurocentric approaches, with a series of articles that explore social policy in what we term here the Global South and Global East. This is a „strategically essentialist“ shorthand, in Spivak’s terms (Spivak, 1988), for a shifting geography of those with a shared experience of subjugation under global capitalism, as Müller (2020) phrases it, as well as shared forms of political subjectivity against Western hegemony, what Getachew (2019) has termed „counter-hegemonic worldmaking“. The papers include both studies of social policy in one country together with studies that address transnational and regional policy formations, the impacts of international actors on social policy, and policy translation, lesson learning and exchange.

The article by Jelena Vidojević looks at cash transfer programs in South Africa in the context of recent policy shifts in terms of social protection in the Global South. Notwithstanding the livelihood gains, she argues that the pro-

grams still tend to reinforce a layered social welfare based on categorisation of „deservingness“. Combining insights from the work of Achille Mbembe and Jozsef Böröcz, Noémi Lendvai-Bainton explores the theme of racialized hierarchies within social policy in the peripheralised parts of Eastern Europe as constitutive of a mode of authoritarian governance. Michael Zok explores the historical development of patriarchal conservatism in communist Poland, suggesting that the origins of the re-traditionalisation of Polish society rest upon the construction of the demographic crisis in the 1970s, highlighting continuities and discontinuities in Polish communism and post-communism. Engaging directly with work on welfare arrangements under colonialism and post-colonialism, Daniel Künzler traces the privileged social policy position of civil servants in the Republic of Congo as a key element of continuity across very different social formations. Paul Stubbs concentrates on the social policy of socialist Yugoslavia and traces explicit and implicit connections with the Global South in terms of the circulation of discourses, personnel and practice during the height of the Non-Aligned Movement in the 1970s.

REFERENCES

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