

# Timing, Sequencing, and the Institutional Origins of Welfare States

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## Abstract

We argue that differences in the timing and sequencing of processes of liberalization explain important differences among welfare states, and the paper posits four developmental paths, based on these differences. First, where liberal institutions were established long before the adoption of welfare programs, liberal principles had a strong effect on early programs. Second, the adoption of welfare programs prior to the liberalization of political institutions led to the entrenchment of non-liberal ideas in a country's welfare state. Third, in countries where the timing of liberalization and welfare policy came close together, early welfare policy was part of the general debate over liberalization, resulting in a liberal-hybrid. Fourth, dramatic regime shifts in some countries prevented liberal or any other form of political institution from having a definitive path dependent effect and the welfare state exhibits a "layering" of liberal and non-liberal programs. We suggest that these historical legacies say much about the capacities of welfare states for neo-liberal adaptations to globalization.

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# **Timing, Sequencing, and the Institutional Origins of Welfare States**

## **Abstract**

We argue that differences in the timing and sequencing of processes of liberalization explain important differences among welfare states, and the paper posits four developmental paths, based on these differences. First, where liberal institutions were established long before the adoption of welfare programs, liberal principles had a strong effect on early programs. Second, the adoption of welfare programs prior to the liberalization of political institutions led to the entrenchment of non-liberal ideas in a country's welfare state. Third, in countries where the timing of liberalization and welfare policy came close together, early welfare policy was part of the general debate over liberalization, resulting in a liberal-hybrid. Fourth, dramatic regime shifts in some countries prevented liberal or any other form of political institution from having a definitive path dependent effect and the welfare state exhibits a "layering" of liberal and non-liberal programs. We suggest that these historical legacies say much about the capacities of welfare states to adapt to globalization.

## **Introduction**

New efforts to theorize institutional change are reframing how we understand processes of political development. Some of the most novel theorizing in this area has articulated three important points: that path dependence is often mitigated by ongoing conflict over the structure and purpose of institutions (Thelen 2004), that institutions in one area are linked to and may even complement institutional processes in other, related areas (Pierson 2000; Hall and Soskice 2001); and that timing and sequencing can have a strong effect on the degree to which institutional processes take on a path-dependent character (Pierson 2000).

The history of welfare states would provide a good test for the relevance of this new line of thinking because our understanding of that history is fairly well established. Broadly, there are three competing interpretations of the history of welfare states. One interpretation holds that welfare programs were a functional consequence of other processes of modernization, such as urbanization, industrialization, and the resulting

cross-national diffusion (Wilensky 1975; Collier and Messick 1975). Another interpretation traces the origins of welfare states to changing cultural attitudes about the nature of the national community and the proper role of the state in society (Briggs 1985; Marshall 1981; Castles 1993). Perhaps the dominant interpretation remains the social democratic argument that welfare states were the product of political struggle between labor and business interests (Korpi 1980; Stephens 1979; Hicks 1999).<sup>1</sup> These interpretations are not necessarily mutually exclusive, as adherents to each more or less agree on the outcomes, namely that the welfare states which resulted fall into three broad categories, best summarized by Gosta Esping-Anderson (1990) as the liberal, social democratic or conservative types (see also Titmuss 1974). A test of recent developments in institutional theory would be their ability to add to our understanding of this well-tilled field of research.

This paper seeks to examine the relevance of timing, sequencing and institutional complementarities for the period of program adoption (roughly from the 1850s to the 1920s). The argument focuses on the relationship between the early adoption of social welfare and the development and entrenchment of liberal institutions. We assert that political liberalization and the adoption of welfare programs are strongly linked institutional processes, marked by a complementarity between the liberal institutions and the redistributive institutions of modern welfare states. The idea of institutional complementarity is already a central feature of the literature that examines the “varieties of capitalism” (Hall and Soskice 2001, 18; Streeck 2001). In that literature, scholars have identified strong relationships between the institutions for coordination of macro-

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<sup>1</sup> An important sub-theme in this approach is the study of the political influence of Christian Democratic, particularly Catholic movements (van Kersbergen 1995; Manow 2002).

economic policy, labor market regulations and trade union involvement in the delivery of welfare programs. Complementarities across these institutions create path dependencies by helping to entrench the power of important actors, and of certain customs and norms, such as corporatist consultation.

We assert that a similar relationship exists between welfare programs and institutions of political authority. Political institutions prescribe the process by which decisions are reached and who has the authority to decide. Welfare institutions are fundamentally redistributive institutions that allocate resources and often transfer them among groups and individuals in society. The two institutions are linked, and therefore there also should be natural complementarities between different types of political institutions and welfare states.

Liberalization is a process that involves creation of a constitutional legal order and establishment of citizens as fundamental rights-bearing creatures (Zakaria 2003). This we define as the existence of civil rights and a clear constitutional order constrained by the rule of law. Second, liberal democracies are democratic in that they allow citizens an effective role in political participation. To this we add Arend Lijphart's (1984) definition of a democracy as a liberal order which has an executive accountable to the citizenry or to an elected parliament, universal (male) suffrage, and effective party competition. In a liberal state, democratic legitimacy enhances decisions that emphasize the rights of citizens, their formal equality and a sense of legal due process, especially when those decisions are reached through constitutional mechanisms that allow (indirect) popular control.

This notion of liberal legitimacy is what provides the complementary linkage between a liberal state and a welfare state. Most definitions of welfare states employ some notion of rights as the basis for an individual's claim to assistance and posit the importance of equal treatment of all citizens. This notion of a modern welfare state challenges conceptions of welfare provision that might distribute assistance to a specific social group, rather than to citizens, or might condition that assistance on a notion of social worth, independent of one's citizenship status. A liberal political order, therefore, is complementary to a welfare state that legitimates its benefits as rights of citizenship, grants all citizens formal equality with respect to the assistance available, and codifies this in a formal legal order. Douglas Ashford (1986) suggested this connection many years ago, but not with the theoretical rigor offered by the 'new institutionalist' literature.

Our second point is that **sequencing** had a strong effect on the relationship between political liberalization and welfare adoption. In countries where liberal democracies were established prior to the discussion of welfare policy, those institutions had decisive, path-dependent effects on the way welfare programs were designed. The establishment of a rule of law and of institutions of parliamentary government created decision making processes that favored rationality, more transparency and broader coverage of the population. They expressed a preference for policy arguments that invoked notions of equality over those that invoke notions of difference among citizens, and for those that stress rights and responsibilities over those with more deterministic notions of the human condition. The effect for the welfare programs in these countries was more universalism in welfare coverage and more equality in the levels of benefits (though generous benefits were not always the result of liberalization). We call this

Pattern One, and good examples of this pattern are Sweden, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

In countries where the sequencing was reversed, the absence of liberal democratic institutions allowed other non-liberal regimes to lay a decisive stamp on the organization of welfare programs. Typically, these were more authoritarian political regimes and/or societies with stratified social relations. The resulting welfare programs reinforced social stratification and/or reflected other specific interests of the ruling officials, such as their efforts to pacify or gain the loyalty of certain social groups by rewarding them welfare provisions. The norms and values of these pre-liberal political regimes had spill-over effects for the development of early social policy. Consequently, welfare programs in many of these countries had non-liberal characteristics, such as a focus on the family unit rather than the individual or strongly segmented differences in coverage and benefits, and retained these characteristics long after liberalization changed the political order. Indeed, in these countries, the later arrival of liberal democracy allowed those welfare programs to create a path-dependent resistance to welfare liberalization. We call this Pattern Two, and Germany and Austria are archetypal examples of this pattern.

The third part of the argument considers the **timing** of the programs, more specifically the relationship in time between the processes of political liberalization and welfare adoption. This point requires a slight modification from the way Paul Pierson (2000) introduced the concept of timing to the study of historical processes. For Pierson, timing refers to the temporal space between events. Events that are important for creating a path need to occur at propitious moments, and if they miss their moment, they might not have the same effect. Likewise, events that might be powerful enough to

disrupt a path will likely have greater impact if they occur at an early stage. If they come at a later stage, the lock-in effects of the developmental process might minimize their effect. Timing, in this sense, provides a way to evaluate the success of an event to establish (or disrupt) a path dependent process. Many studies of the history of welfare states have employed a similar discussion of timing by focusing on “watershed” periods where dramatic change was possible (see, e.g. Skocpol 1992; Klausen 1998).

For this study, however, we apply timing in a different sense, though the basic dynamic is similar. Rather than the temporal location of an event within a process, we define timing as the relative pace of two related institutional processes. This is important for examining the history of welfare states, because often in that history welfare states are treated as events “that happened.” In fact, welfare states almost everywhere developed not in one ‘big bang’, but in stages, as different programs were adopted. Changes in the institutional and political environment had a large impact on the trajectories of welfare development. Most important here is that the later liberalization took place compared to the development of a welfare state, the less likely it was to change the trajectory of welfare development. This point even rings loudly today. Countries whose first welfare programs were adopted by non-liberal regimes still have trouble today enacting liberal reforms to those programs.

We should note that liberalization, too is a process that exhibits great variety. T. H. Marshall argued that liberalization went in stages. The first stage was the adoption of civil rights and legal guarantees, such as the rule of law, the second stage was the expansion of democratic representation, and the third stage was the expansion of policy areas in which individuals were provided equal protection. This pattern seems to fit early

liberalizers fairly well, but the sequencing of these stages often was truncated, reversed or otherwise blurred in countries that liberalized later, or quickly. Our point here is that the relationship between the two processes admits a wide variety of real experience.

To return to the main point, the two patterns of sequencing described earlier reflect long lags in timing that allowed the existing characteristics of the political regime to have strong effects on the adoption of social programs. But, when the timing of liberalism and welfare adoption were close together, we should expect these path dependent effects to have been absent and therefore a different dynamic to emerge. In other words, liberal democracies either were well established at the time of welfare adoption, or they came much later. But when liberalization and welfare adoption were temporally close, the debate about social programs became caught up in, and indistinguishable from larger debates about constitutional and institutional reform that liberalization engendered. Social programs were more explicitly tied to the debates over the character of the national community, and the administrative structures were more carefully designed to reflect the values of the new political order. But, the weakness of both liberalism and the visions of social welfare left them open to hotly contested challenges. The result often was a welfare state which had some liberal characteristics, but was just as often an incoherent hybrid, reflecting compromises between contending political forces. Of course, there is heated debate within well-established liberal democracies about the proper scope of social policy. Many astute observers note that liberalism is a contested set of ideas admitting of a variety of interpretations and applications, not all of which are benign (Blyth 2002; King 1999). But, there is a decisive difference in the scope of the debate between countries where liberal democracy was

well-established and enshrined in political institutions, and those where liberal democracy also was in contention. The latter we call Pattern Three, and good examples are Denmark and the Netherlands.

Indeed, considering the effect of timing and sequencing reveals a fourth pattern in welfare state adoption. Many countries in Europe had long (and sometimes strong) liberal democratic traditions that were punctuated with periods of non-liberal regime change. The welfare states in these countries exhibit curious patterns of “institutional layering” (Thelen 2004) as programs adopted under different regimes represent a variety of characteristics, sometimes liberal and sometimes quite the opposite. These countries, for example France and Italy, have never fit comfortably within any of the three dominant models of welfare state development. One additional advantage of our institutional perspective is that it gives us stronger theoretical purchase on the histories of countries that often fail to fit cleanly any of the three dominant types of welfare state. From this background discussion of the argument, we proceed to the examination of the cases. The treatment is brief, and lumping countries together into the patterns they resemble obscures some of the important differences, but it helps to reveal the utility of the analytical points.

## **Methodology**

Data for this paper used historical evidence from 21 different countries. To examine the theoretical strength of timing and sequencing of processes of liberalization for explaining differences among welfare states, we used Western European countries commonly used in comparative theoretical literature on welfare states: Austria, Belgium,

Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK. Finland and Norway were included to enlarge the pool of Scandinavian countries often referred to as “social democratic” welfare states (Esping-Andersen, 1990); Ireland, Switzerland and the U.S. were included to enhance the variation in cases with a heavier liberal component to their social policies; Greece, Portugal and Spain were included to help flesh out the more problematic cases of welfare development – like Italy and France, these countries have complex histories of regime changes and broken social policies that make categorization into the three worlds of welfare capitalism more problematic. Previous literature has discussed these cases, along with Italy, as “Southern European” welfare states, defined by a heavier reliance on the family than conservative welfare states and stronger historical ties to the church (Castles 1993).

In addition, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Japan, and Poland were included in the analysis as additional test cases for the timing and sequencing arguments. The strength of these cases is that they allow for study beyond western Europe and North America; Japan offers a non-Western example of liberal institutions, and the Eastern European countries provide a more recent instance of transition to liberal regimes. Broadening the scope to include such a variety of cases enhances the explanatory power of the timing and sequencing arguments, and provides ample variation in historical experience to make the theoretical argument more robust.

The notion of transition to liberal institutions was operationalized on four notions: civil rights, parliamentary or republican democracy, party competition, and expanded male suffrage (not universal suffrage). Civil rights establish a legal framework for equal treatment, delineating citizenship as the primary criteria of entitlement, outlining

procedures of due process, and establishing a legal framework for equal treatment by introducing the concept of rights. These notions were therefore operationalized by finding evidence for the initial constitutional parameters of the due process of law, the legal status of the individual and its relevant protections, and the right to freedom of speech and association. Parliamentary or republican democracy creates a forum whereby groups outside the traditional political elite can bring pressure to bear on legislation; this was operationalized by the establishment of the principle of ministerial responsibility), evidenced by either the Crown or executive (or both) being held accountable to the legislature. In a similar vein, party competition ensures that groups outside the traditional political elite might gain control of government. Huntington offers a useful measure of party competition – a two-term minimum test ensures that competition is protected when governments change peacefully (1991). Finally, expanded suffrage establishes the preference for citizenship as the central criterion for membership in the community – a preference that sets the stage for universalism in policymaking. Rather than basing universal suffrage on the criterion of women receiving the right to vote, this paper uses the measure of expanded *male* suffrage for reasons relevant to the general historical argument. Although ‘universal’ is something of a misnomer, given its qualification by gender, the central concept is that all men had the legal right to vote regardless of class, political affiliation, or property restrictions. This operationalization is congruent with the above three early measures of transition to liberal institutions. Each of these measurements establishes institutions founded on liberal principles that over time embed those principles in the political culture.

We determined early social policy by the initial legislative adoption of pensions, sickness insurance, social insurances aimed at relieving unemployment and disability, and programs of poor relief/public assistance. This last program requires elaboration. Poor relief is generally conceived of as existing in three stages; charity relief exercised separate from the state, a nineteenth century system of public policy for the deprived, and a more modern system of means-tested public assistance (Cox 1993b). We identified shifts made to this last stage only, on the basis that a state-led system of poor relief best captured the liberalization of entitlement criteria – however, often times this shift still used the language of ‘poor relief’ even when the term ‘public assistance’ better captured the organization of the policy. In many instances, social insurance programs aimed at relieving disability were lumped in with those targeted towards poor relief.

Only in few cases did all of these social policies arrive simultaneously; as such we looked for the establishment of at least two of these programs to arrive at a proxy for a welfare state.

### **Pattern One: Liberal Welfare States**

Where liberal democracies preceded the adoption of welfare programs, we expected liberal principles to have a decisive, path-dependent effect on early welfare programs. When institutionalization of the rule of law and parliamentary or republican democracy occurred at a date significantly earlier than the first implementations of widespread social policies, the idea of individual rights and liberties became incorporated into the mechanisms of welfare distribution. Liberal institutions provided a form within which political forces competed for control over the definition of early social programs.

And, liberal principles embedded in these institutions afforded a preference for proposal that conformed to the rule of law, such as universal or egalitarian notions of entitlement.

The U.S., U.K., Sweden and Switzerland all fall into this category. All four had a relatively early experience with the transition to liberal democracy, with a lag of at least 30 years before the introduction of significant social policies (see Table 1). Ireland also falls into this category; to the extent that its liberal institutionalism and social policies pre-independence are those of the UK may lead one to surmise that Ireland's inclusion is redundant, however the progression of social insurance policies following the Irish Free State in 1921 still demonstrates features in line with a liberal welfare state. Although we do not delve into the Irish case in detail, Table 1 summarizes the key features of the development of the Irish welfare state that make in appropriate for inclusion in this category.

The first important pension laws in each country – 1913 for Sweden, 1946 for Switzerland, 1908 for the UK, and 1935 for the U.S. (see Table 1) – show a heavy inclination toward basic security programs, which typically locates eligibility for benefits on the basis on citizenship and provides a flat rate of benefits for all insured. This was most evident for Sweden, Switzerland, and the U.S., whereas the UK also encompassed means-tested elements (Korpi 2001; Flora 1987).

The advent of sickness insurance had more variability in the organization of benefits but retained distribution according to widespread eligibility. Sweden and Switzerland (1891 and 1911 respectively) both introduced health benefits organized amongst voluntary organizations, state subsidies, and membership fees (Korpi 2001). The UK (1911) initiated sickness insurance under a basic security program. To the extent that

Medicare and Medicaid act as a proxy for general sickness insurance schemes, the U.S. (1968) relied on universal insurance for those over 65 and means-testing for those with limited income (O'Conner and Sabato 2004; Béland 2005).

Social insurance for unemployment, disability, and public assistance, remained attached to early poor laws and early old age relief for all four cases. Sweden initiated a reform of its early poor laws in 1920; Switzerland in 1925. The UK refined its poor laws of the early 1900s under the Old Age Pension law of 1908 (Flora 1987). The U.S. did not develop any extensive social insurance system until the 1935 Social Security Act, which encompassed income security in the form of unemployment insurance, poor relief, old age pensions, and worker assistance (Béland 2005; O'Connor and Sabato 2004).

These indicators of early welfare states all reveal a strong attachment to the ideas of legal rights and citizenship. The prevalence of basic security and means-tested targeted models illustrate the dynamics of protection according to residency or citizenship, either of which fundamentally associates eligibility with a right of residency. This is evident with both egalitarian distributions of flat-rates and slanted distributions according to proportionate need. Basic security models do this on a universal scale, while targeted models distribute benefits equally after targeting those that meet the means-tested criteria.

Our research is unusual for lumping Sweden in with welfare states typically thought of as Anglo-American liberal. Many scholarly works classify Sweden with other Scandinavian countries on the basis of its social democratic politics; in these arguments, it was the power of the organized left that shaped the modern welfare state, and this political legacy is visible in the vast Swedish social protection scheme. We instead posit that the concept of generosity must remain distinct from the concept of universal

eligibility – generosity, visible in the extensive protections afforded to Swedish citizens, is a function of political control rather than institutional ideology. While the Social Democrats built the Swedish welfare state, they built it not as leftist revolutionaries but as vigorous members of a liberal democracy. In this sense, the Social Democrats were empowered by liberal institutions. Therefore, Sweden and the U.S. have a great deal more in common as far as their institutional legacies go than other welfare state theories might allow. The idea of equality that underlies the notion of how benefits should be distributed is according to the rule of law and associated liberal institutions; the obvious difference in generosity between the two welfare states only adds to this point. Both Sweden and the U.S. enjoyed fairly stable political control from the point of liberalization (Sweden with the Social Democrats, the U.S. with liberal party politics) – the UK, by contrast, had much more contentious party politics – and these politics shaped the organization and allocation of the *amount* of benefit, but the point remains that it was modern liberal ideology, embedded in institutions of law, parliament, party competition and suffrage that influenced the *ease* by which policies could be made universal. The next three sections on other welfare patterns illustrate this point.

### **Pattern Two: Non-Liberal Welfare States**

The welfare states in this category have the reverse sequencing pattern from the previous pattern. Instead of pre-dating the adoption of welfare programs by a significant time frame, welfare states in the non-liberal pattern began with the initiation of social programs during the absence of liberal political institutions. The regimes of this pattern were typically more authoritarian political regimes and/or societies with stratified social

relations, and the institutions of these regimes embedded certain values and norms of their own into the social protection programs later initiated in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century period. Emblematic of these values are a highly stratified distribution of benefits and a provision of welfare services that attaches eligibility to contributions or workforce membership. As well, the notion and language of rights is often absent from social programs, thus reflecting a focus on the family or work unit rather than on the notion of individuality.

While Germany and Austria are most representative of this pattern with social policies introduced in the Bismarkian era, Hungary and Japan can be included in this category as well. The logic of this grouping is not only that the sequencing of key social policies pre-dated institutional liberalization, but that welfare provision to this day is less tied to an explicit recognition of social rights than in other countries. While income transfers are often quite generous for countries in this group, the overall level of social services available to the citizenry remains relatively low.

Germany's first pension law was introduced in 1898 and attached benefits to earnings. Provisions were designed according to a combination of contributions and were tailored differently for different occupational categories, in many cases with the top and bottom income earners excluded from benefits – top earners were expected to purchase provision elsewhere, and bottom earners did not meet the contributory requirements for pension allotment (Korpi 2001; Flora 1987). Austria initiated its first pension laws in 1906 along similar lines (see Table 2). Japan formally extended pension provision to non-public servants in 1941 with the Worker's Pension Insurance Law, which primarily targeted workers in factories and business. We address the Hungarian case – a bit of an

anomaly in this category due to the socialist interlude from the postwar period to the early 1990s – at the end of this section.

Sickness insurance for all three countries follows a similar model. Initiated in 1883 (Germany), 1888 (Austria), and 1922 (Japan), health care benefits were inseparable from wage benefits and contributory schemes. Virtually no flat-rate benefits or means-testing were available for the low income earners or the unemployed through state programs (Korpi 2001; Flora 1987).

Social insurance for unemployment and disability was incorporated into Germany's National Insurance Code of 1911, but remained applicable only for the specific occupational categories that were afforded pension and sickness protection. While Austria began offering some subsidies in case of unemployment in 1892, the legal right to unemployment insurance was not formalized until the 1920 Unemployment Insurance Act; this offered benefits based on contributions for mostly white-collar and factory workers. Japan, by contrast, did not have any formal unemployment insurance until the post war period; however, some system of provision for certain occupational categories was included in the 1938 National Insurance laws which provided benefits according to employer and employee contributions (Tsukada 2002).

Finally, all three countries had various systems of poor relief in place through churches, charities, and some state subsidies. Germany institutionalized public assistance in 1924 and Austria in 1929. Japan formalized its poor relief in the form of reformatory relief work and organized mutual assistance in 1909 – this was reformed in the 1932 Relief Act to target the very poor and exclude the unemployed.

The significance of all the above social welfare programs is not only in the sequencing – these protections were all adopted well before liberal institutions took hold (see Table 2) – but also in the content of their distribution. One notable feature of social welfare programs in this sequencing pattern is the differentiation between public and private employment; civil servants are entitled to a much larger distribution of benefits than non-civil employees. As well, the distinction among types of employment in the private realm is also of consequence, with benefits slanted according to the stratification of occupational categories. The legacy of this form of welfare state organization, one often referred to elsewhere as *social corporatist* (Korpi 2001; Esping-Andersen 1999), is that recent reforms have encountered strong obstacles to welfare liberalization. The path-dependence of the programs' initial content remains embedded in the structure and distribution of social insurance protections, and reorganizing the structure according to liberal notions of universality and citizenship remains problematic.

Reverse sequencing had an effect on efforts to liberalize the political order. In Germany, for example, liberals were around from the time of Bismarck's first programs, but they lacked power. Their arrival as a strong political force came during the Weimar Republic. But these liberals were unlike liberals in other northern European countries. Responding to a strongly statist and paternalistic society, liberal leaders in Germany developed an ideology of '*Ordoliberalism*,' a type of liberalism that was suspicious of individual rights and appreciated the positive role a strong state could play in maintaining order in society. Following World War II, *Ordoliberals* were successful in working with Christian democrats to create the famous Social Market Economy (Manow 2002). The

welfare state, an important part of the Social Market Economy, was designed with the family, not the individual citizen as the fundamental legal entity.

The Hungarian case offers support to this contention despite its more complicated political history. In both sickness (1891) and accident (1907) insurance, Hungary's initial social protections were early on compared to most Western nations (see Appendix for dates). These regulations followed closely after Germany and Austria and were organized by the same logic; protection for industrial workers which for the most part extended to factory workers, but at the exclusion of agricultural workers (Szikra 2002). Consistent with other countries in this pattern, eligibility was tied to occupational categories, which served to reinforce the regional and social disparities between classes. Although the timing and content of these initial reforms were progressive, the emphasis on conditionality attached to benefits maintained its non-liberal character throughout the state-led communist years: "alongside timely attempts to modernisation there were many 'developmental deficits' ranging from the feudal structures to the lack of socially strong organisations or of politically effective discussions." (Szikra 2002, 149). Other social insurance laws came significantly later; pensions in 1928, disability in 1957, and unemployment in 1989. The lack of early liberalization was evident in the uneven distribution of social insurance protections even throughout the postwar years of state socialism as agricultural workers continued to receive inadequate benefits due to either lack of eligibility or lack of ability to pay the contributions. Consistent with the pattern of non-liberal welfare states, the development of the Hungarian welfare state evolved more on the path of occupational and familial compulsory schemes rather than on the foundation of individual rights and citizenship.

### **Pattern Three: The Consequences of Contested Liberalism**

Timing, more than sequencing, is relevant for this category where the process of liberalization and the adoption of welfare policy came close together. In most of the cases, the sequential development of liberal institutions and specific social programs are blurred together within a 20-year span, with aspects of gradualism in both areas. As a result, much of early welfare policy became caught up in and inseparable from the general debate over liberalization. The countries in this category support the argument for sequencing in the first two patterns with an absence of sequencing logic in their own histories – with liberalization and welfare adoption so temporally close, the political discussion over social programs became a part of the arguments over constitutional and institutional reforms.

Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, and Norway all fall into this category. Belgium, Denmark, and the Netherlands share the characteristics of some early liberal features that were not formally institutionalized until the turn of the twentieth century, whereas Finland and Norway, both long under the dominions of external monarchy, had more definitive transitions to liberal institutions in the early 1900s (see Table 3). The close timing of welfare program adoption – both directly before and after consolidation of liberal institutions – lent a distinctly contestatory character to social programs. Given that neither liberal institutions nor the welfare state had had enough time to cement themselves formally and develop entrenched properties, we see welfare programs in this pattern with a high degree of protection that evolved from political

struggles in the years following liberalization which were successfully able to challenge or build off of the original features of citizenship.

Yet, there were important differences in the character of political contest in these countries, and that led to some interesting differences in the character of welfare state development. In the Netherlands, for example, liberals advocated a welfare state based on a conception of the individual, but faced strong opposition from confessional forces who feared the anomic tendencies of liberalism. Catholics and Protestants, despite their other differences, banded together to protect their organizational power in the economy, as well as their dominance of poor relief programs. The result was a hybrid—poor relief programs were equally administered by municipal authorities to citizens and by churches to their own followers. Pension and other worker insurance programs outlined rights based on individual contributions, but allowed unions organized along confessional lines to administer the programs, and thereby exercise a great deal of discretion (Cox 1993b).

In Denmark, the religious divide was absent. Instead welfare reformers were urban liberals who squared-off against rural landholders. A universal pension and universal poverty assistance, financed out of general revenues, were an accidental result of a compromise that satisfied the desires of the urban bourgeoisie to be included in the programs, and the rural elite to shift the tax burden away from land and estate taxes.

Finland and Norway exhibit features of contested liberalism by distributing benefits both according to specific target groups and towards citizens at large (Flora 1987). Old-age and sickness protections began based on the accumulation of premiums paid by the insured and employers, but developed in the post-war years into the more expansive social insurance protections emblematic of Nordic countries. While health care

and child-related benefits have expanded to provide vast comprehensive coverage for all individual citizens, insurances related to income level and disabilities remained organized according to differential risk and contributory schemes. Contestation is thus evidence on the basis on uneven eligibility – certain protections offer widespread and generous coverage, as a result of social democratic politics in the postwar years, while other remain generous only in the context of targeting and situational categorization.

Belgium provides an interesting test case for this pattern because of its least obvious fit. The dates of Belgium's transition to liberal institutions compared to the dates of initial Belgian social protection laws would seem to be better placed in the pattern of liberal welfare states (see Table 3). Yet the Belgian welfare state also exhibits traits of extensive worker protections that are indicative of its non-liberal origins. A hybrid of the Dutch and the French models, Belgium has had exceptionally strong trade union participation in governmental administrations. De Deken (2002) attributes this to the very strong presence of the Christian labor movement and its resulting integration with Christian Democratic political parties. The strength of the Christian labor movement early on situated the influential position of Christian trade union federations in government – this helped shape a welfare state system of social insurances tied to labor market performance and Bismarckian distributive logic, despite the relatively early experience of Belgium's transition to liberal institutions. The strong corporatist tradition present in the Christian labor legacy mitigated the liberal notion of eligibility based on citizenship and shaped many welfare programs in a labor-centered, rather than inclusionist, manner – this helped the formation of Belgian social policies in more of a hybrid direction than that of a fundamentally liberal welfare state.

#### **Pattern Four: Layered Welfare States**

Both timing and sequencing are critical to illustrating the convoluted routes to welfare states for the countries in the fourth pattern. Dramatic interruptions of political institutions prevented liberal, or any other form of political institution, from having a definitive path-dependent effect on the welfare state. Countries such as France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece had sometimes strong liberal traditions, during which important adoptions of social welfare programs developed, but these liberal traditions were punctuated with periods of non-liberal regime change that eroded the consolidation effects of both institutions and social protection. Conversely, the Czech Republic and Poland are characterized more by longer histories of monarchical and authoritarian rule interspersed with brief forays with liberalization in the post-WWI era; these temporary periods of liberal rule in the early 1990s introduced some initial welfare programs that were later either replaced or modified by non-liberal regime programs. Where all these countries share similarities is in the layered nature of their resulting welfare states, whether as a result of liberalism punctuated by non-liberalism, or the opposite. None of these countries ever fit comfortably within any of the three dominant models of welfare state development as their welfare compositions represent a variety of characteristics – some with liberal elements and some without.

The relevance of this fourth pattern is that it not only offers an explanation for why countries like Italy and France have previously held such awkward fits in the established literature on welfare state categorizations, but it also serves to illustrate the salience of timing and sequencing of liberalization as an argument in and of itself. The

more convoluted evolution of these welfare states is a counter-example to the long lags in sequencing evidenced in Patterns 1 and 2, and adds additional support to contestatory nature of temporally close welfare development in Pattern 3. The familialism present in Italian social protections is offset by both a heavy degree of corporatism similar to the German variety as well as universality in health care. The Italian welfare state went through a heavy expansion of services in the 1970s, but benefits remained unevenly distributed through the regions, and are targeted primarily according to family size and income (European Welfare States Information and Resources website). For the French welfare state, the three traditions of monarchy, revolution, and Catholicism have all intervened with the development of both liberal institutions and the evolution of the welfare state. The result is a layering of statist intervention, paternalistic reforms emphasizing the family, and a large degree of corporatism due to the involvement of associations in the implementation and dissemination of benefits (Ibid).

Pensions provide a relevant example for the French and Italian cases. Both countries initiated pension laws in the early 1900s (1910 for France, 1919 for Italy – see Table 4) that entailed large amounts of public spending on pensions with a relatively high degree of fragmentation between the public and private sectors. In contrast to the universalist systems of health care that developed in each country later on, pensions remained insurance-based and proportional to contributions in both countries, and are industry-wide and mandated in France. The legacy of mixed political regimes is evident in the pension reform attempts in each country; Italy's attempts to retrench public spending on pension benefits were undertaken in tandem with family assistance revisions which made family assistance dependent on family size and household income rather

than individual means-testing. The family-centric policies of the Catholic Church combined with a non-liberal emphasis on occupational categories have made pension reform efforts inseparable from issues pertaining to youth and old-age unemployment and uneven regional distribution of benefits. The French legacy of statism is much more visible in pension development rather than the presence of the Church; although the first pension law arose during the parliamentary period of the Third Republic, the continual crises of government left the state-formulated welfare policy vulnerable to the numerous associations and organizations implementing pension schemes, leaving pension distribution and reform discussion located in disparate employer and employee organizations (Ibid).

Spain, Greece, and Portugal exhibit the same layering character but with a different degree of emphasis. Catholicism competed with authoritarian regimes in both Spain and Portugal, and military juntas with both church and monarchical authority in Greece. These three countries have less of a history with punctuated liberalism than do France and Italy, yet all encompass elements of both Bismarckian and Beveridgian traditions in their familialism: the concept of the family as an institution to stress intergenerational dependency is combined with a high degree of fragmentation along occupational lines and universal health care as a right for all citizens (Flaquer 2001). The significance for the timing and sequencing of liberal institutions is that the layered development of these welfare states prevented any one form of political institution from having a strong impact on social protection programs. Present attempts at reforms – particularly in the area of pensions, which involve high government spending in all five countries – are convoluted not only by organized interests challenging retrenchment but

by a lack of political consensus on how any social welfare programs should be conceptualized. The mix of liberalism, paternalism, and corporatism creates different path-dependent legacies for individual programs rather than for the welfare state as a whole; thus, current attempts to reform welfare programs in a liberal direction have met with varying degrees of success or failure according to the origins of each program. Variation among these states is not located in the tension between politics and generosity, as among the previous patterns, but in the historical degrees of liberalism compared to non-liberal regimes. The main implication stemming from this hypothesis is that rather than resting on a typology of Mediterranean welfare states developing out of tradition or 'latecomer' status (Rhodes 1997), the development of these welfare states is more salient with regard to the broken and punctuated experiences with liberal regimes.

The Czech Republic has a pattern that might fit in either the contested or the layered category. The major programs of the modern welfare state were adopted in 1924 by the very ambitious first liberal democracy in what was then Czechoslovakia (Mamatey 1973). Following the German occupation in World War II, a democratic regime (1945-1948) worked quickly to universalize insurance programs and the reform was implemented by the Communists who came to power in 1948 (Potůček 2004; Schönfelder 1988). But, communism also resulted in some revisions that reflected socialist principles of natalism, such as early pensions for women based on the number of children they had. Following the end of communist rule and the separation of the Czech and Slovak republics, the Czech Republic returned to its historical path, resurrecting the laws from the early post war period (Cox 1993a).

Poland's briefer experience with post-WWI liberalism, by contrast, made its tentative social protection programs more malleable to communist dictatorship. Although certain welfare legislations had been quite extensive during the inter-war period, Soviet processes were wholeheartedly adopted following WWII, and welfare benefits were organized according to quantity over quality. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, social policies came to be seen as an economic necessity rather than a feature of a liberal government (Deacon et al 1992). Thus, the layered nature of both the Czech Republic and Polish welfare states was influenced by the length and depth of their experiences with liberalism in the early 1900s.

## **Conclusions**

Our objective in this paper was to apply three central concepts of new institutional theory to the period of welfare adoption. We outlined a complementarity between liberal states and the basic principles that legitimate welfare states. Second, we suggested that the notions of sequencing should lead us to expect the adoption of liberal welfare programs in countries that had well established liberal political orders, and non-liberal welfare programs in countries that lacked liberal institutions. Third, we suggested that timing had a strong effect on the degree to which liberal institutions affected the development of welfare programs. The suggestion is that countries where liberalization came at about the same time as welfare adoption resulted in welfare states where the debates over the efficacy of liberalism were also embedded into the structure of welfare institutions. Examining the effect of timing also revealed that countries which had liberal

states, interspersed with authoritarian epochs have welfare states that exhibit a layering in their welfare programs.

These findings are significant for a number of reasons. First, they lead to a re-clustering of countries in ways that are quite startling. The United States and Sweden are often depicted as countries with diametrically opposed welfare states. Yet they share a tradition of liberalization that predates the development of their welfare states. Where they differ is in the effect of the balance of political forces at the time of welfare adoption. Indeed, one could go so far as to say that it was the liberal state that allowed a more inclusive political system, and provided the institutional forum for Swedish social democrats to successfully build an expansive welfare state.

A second important implication is that focusing on the effect of the political order gives us greater insight into the Mediterranean welfare states, which have always fit awkwardly in the typologies of welfare states. Mediterranean countries share a troubled history of dramatic shifts in political regime. These shifts had a big effect on the development of welfare states because they interrupted the complementarities between the welfare system and the political order. This, in turn, weakened the path dependent momentum of those welfare systems and the result was a layering of welfare programs that reflected the concerns of the regimes that enacted them.

Finally, this framework offers a way to understand the differential responses to global pressures on welfare states. Countries that seem to have the least disruptive adjustments to the global economy are those whose welfare states have solid liberal institutional legacies (Britain, Sweden). This might be because the complementarity between globalization and a liberal welfare system reinforces the path dependent trends

in those welfare states. Even Sweden in recent years has demonstrated itself to be capable of fairly dramatic reform of its welfare system. And, the liberal direction of this reform is not predicted by those who in previous decades say the Swedish welfare state to be a “third way” alternative to liberalism. By contrast, countries with substantial non-liberal characteristics in their welfare systems also have path dependent characteristics, but these path dependencies prove dysfunction due to their lack of institutional complementarity with globalization. On this point, one might find more hope for the Mediterranean countries than for Germany because the layered history of these welfare states weakens the path-dependent effects of their non-liberal characteristics.

## Appendix: Dates of transitions to liberal institution and of initial social welfare programs

Table 1 – Liberal Welfare States

| <i>Country</i>     | <i>Codification of civil liberties</i> | <i>Parliamentary or republican democracy</i> | <i>Party competition</i> | <i>Universal suffrage</i> | <i>First pension law</i> | <i>First sickness insurance law</i> | <i>First social insurance law (unemployment, disability)</i> | <i>First formalized poor relief / public assistance</i> |
|--------------------|--|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Ireland</b>     | 1885 / 1937*                           | 1688 / 1921*                                 | 1850s / 1921*            | 1829 / 1918*              | 1908                     | 1911                                | 1933   | 1908 / 1929*  |
| <b>Sweden</b>      | 1809                                   | 1867   | 1866                     | 1911                      | 1913                     | 1891                                | 1920   | 1920  |
| <b>Switzerland</b> | 1874                                   | 1848   | 1848                     | 1874                      | 1946                     | 1911                                | 1925   | 1935  |
| <b>UK</b>          | 1885                                   | 1688   | 1850s                    | 1829                      | 1908                     | 1911                                | 1908   | 1908  |
| <b>U.S.A.</b>      | 1776                                   | 1776   | 1776                     | 1868                      | 1935                     | 1968                                | 1935   | 1935  |

\*The dual dates for Ireland reflect the timing of Ireland within the UK and as the Irish Free State.

Sources: Béland 2005; Flora 1987; Korpi 2001; O’Conner and Sabato 2004; European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, at <http://www.eurofound.eu.int/bycountry/index.htm>; Country Studies/Area Handbook Series at <http://countrystudies.us>; Social Security Programs Around the World at <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/ssptw/2002-2003/europe/>; Elections Around the World at <http://www.electionworld.org>.

Table 2 – Non-Liberal Welfare States

| <i>Country</i> | <i>Codification of civil liberties</i> | <i>Parliamentary or republican democracy</i> | <i>Party competition</i> | <i>Universal suffrage</i> | <i>First pension law</i> | <i>First sickness insurance law</i> | <i>First social insurance law (unemployment, disability)</i> | <i>First formalized poor relief / public assistance</i> |
|----------------|--|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Austria</b> | 1945                                   | 1945   | 1919                     | 1906                      | 1906                     | 1888                                | 1920   | 1929  |
| <b>Germany</b> | 1949                                   | 1919 / 1949                                  | 1919                     | 1871                      | 1889                     | 1883                                | 1911   | 1924  |
| <b>Hungary</b> | 1989                                   | 1989   | 1989                     | 1921                      | 1928                     | 1891                                | 1957/1989  | 1928  |
| <b>Japan</b>   | 1945                                   | 1920s / 1945                                 | 1945                     | 1945                      | 1941                     | 1922                                | 1938   | 1932  |

Sources: Flora 1987; Korpi 2001; Peng 2000; Szikra 2002; Tsukada 2002; European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, at <http://www.eurofound.eu.int/bycountry/index.htm>; Country Studies/Area Handbook Series at <http://countrystudies.us>; Social Security Programs Around the World at <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/ssptw/2002-2003/europe/>; Elections Around the World at <http://www.electionworld.org>.

Table 3 – Contested Liberalism

| <i>Country</i>     | <i>Codification of civil liberties</i> | <i>Parliamentary or republican democracy</i> | <i>Party competition</i> | <i>Universal suffrage</i> | <i>First pension law</i> | <i>First sickness insurance law</i> | <i>First social insurance law (unemployment, disability)</i> | <i>First formalized poor relief / public assistance</i> |
|--------------------|--|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Belgium</b>     | 1848                                   | 1831   | 1831                     | 1893                      | 1924                     | 1898                                | 1903   | 1925  |
| <b>Denmark</b>     | 1849                                   | 1864   | 1905                     | 1915                      | 1891                     | 1892                                | 1907   | 1891  |
| <b>Finland</b>     | 1919                                   | 1919   | 1919                     | 1906                      | 1937                     | 1963                                | 1937   | 1922  |
| <b>Netherlands</b> | 1920                                   | 1848   | 1890s                    | 1920                      | 1913                     | 1913                                | 1917   | 1913  |
| <b>Norway</b>      | 1814                                   | 1884   | 1884                     | 1913                      | 1936                     | 1909                                | 1938   | 1964  |

Sources: Cox 1993b; Flora 1987; Korpi 2001; European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, at <http://www.eurofound.eu.int/bycountry/index.htm>; Country Studies/Area Handbook Series at <http://countrystudies.us>; Social Security Programs Around the World at <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/ssptw/2002-2003/europe/>; Elections Around the World at <http://www.electionworld.org>.

Table 4 – Layered Welfare States

| <i>Country</i>  | <i>Codification of civil liberties*</i> | <i>Parliamentary or republican democracy*</i> | <i>Party competition*</i> | <i>Universal suffrage</i> | <i>First pension law</i> | <i>First sickness insurance law</i> | <i>First social insurance law (unemployment, disability)</i> | <i>First formalized poor relief / public assistance</i> |
|-----------------|---|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Czech R.</b> | 1918 / 1993                             | 1918  | 1918                      | 1918                      | 1906                     | 1888 / 1997                         | 1991   | ..**  |
| <b>France</b>   | 1789                                    | 1848 / 1871 / 1944                            | 1871                      | 1848                      | 1910                     | 1928                                | 1905   | 1930s   |
| <b>Greece</b>   | 1822 / 1911 / 1974                      | 1875 / 1924 / 1974                            | 1911                      | 1844                      | 1934                     | 1922                                | 1954   | 1981**  |
| <b>Italy</b>    | 1861 / 1911 / 1946                      | 1861 / 1946                                   | 1861 / 1946               | 1911                      | 1919                     | 1943                                | 1919   | 1972  |
| <b>Poland</b>   | 1919 / 1945 / 1991                      | 1919 / 1945 / 1991                            | 1919 / 1991               | 1919                      | 1933                     | 1920                                | 1924 / 1994  | 1992**  |
| <b>Portugal</b> | 1911 / 1974                             | 1911 / 1974                                   | 1911 / 1974               | 1976                      | 1935                     | 1935                                | 1975   | 1970s**   |
| <b>Spain</b>    | 1876 / 1930 / 1975                      | 1876 / 1930 / 1975                            | 1874 / 1974               | 1931                      | 1919                     | 1942                                | 1919   | 1982-3**  |

Sources: Ambler 1991; Deacon et al 1992; Flora 1987; Guillén, Álvarez, and Silva 2003; Korpi 2001; Potůček 2004; European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, at <http://www.eurofound.eu.int/bycountry/index.htm>; Country Studies/Area Handbook Series at <http://countrystudies.us>; Social Security Programs Around the World at <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/ssptw/2002-2003/europe/>; Elections Around the World at <http://www.electionworld.org>.

\*Multiple dates in these columns reflect repeated attempts at consolidating liberal institutions.

\*\*The evidence for poor relief / public assistance laws in these countries was inconclusive.

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