

als that have fallen out of the middle class maintain their market affiliation? While the arguments of the book are deliberately stylised, these arguments are at their weakest when they do not explain how the rifts among and within the middle classes play out in practice, and under what conditions neoliberal interests are more or less likely to become hegemonic.

In many ways, the book achieves what it sets out to do. It is published under the 'Palgrave Provocations' heading, and in it Mau not only asks an important question, he also provides a provocative answer: the middle classes have failed to protect the social-democratic project precisely because it has been so successful. Spoiled by their accomplishments, they have failed to protect the very foundation of their success. And yet, the book buckles under the very tensions it so poignantly describes. In making his arguments, Mau makes no claims to exhaustiveness and he does not attempt to explore variations or heterogeneities. Trading exhaustiveness for an abstracted and suggestive bird's-eye view allows for an apt and compelling description of the contradictions faced by the middle classes. However, this perspective also makes it difficult to fully explore the edges and boundary conditions of Mau's argument, leaving the tensions so artfully built up unsatisfyingly unresolved.

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**Kati Kuitto: *Post-communist Welfare States in European Context: Patterns of Welfare Policies in Central and Eastern Europe***

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The direction the post-socialist welfare states would take and whether they would conform to one of the traditional Western

European ideal types (liberal, conservative-corporatist, social-democratic/Nordic or Southern) are questions that have fascinated political economists ever since the early days of the region's multiple transformations. Most scholars tended to designate a separate regime type to distinguish between Western and Eastern welfare systems, using names such as 'emergency welfare state', 'unique hybrid', 'post-communist regime' [Inglot 2008; Cerami 2009]. However, the authors never agreed on the core characteristics that bind together or differentiate these regimes [Cerami 2009; Fuchs and Offe 2009], often describing them as 'faceless', 'mixed', and 'institutionally volatile' [Szikra and Tomka 2009].

The core of Kati Kuitto's analysis provides a response to the fundamental question whether in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) one or a set of distinguishable welfare regimes emerged after 1989, and, as an antecedent condition to answer that, whether the classical distinction between welfare regimes still holds in Western Europe. In order to examine so, she performs a detailed cluster analysis of 26 European countries—17 from Western and nine from Eastern Europe—on three dimensions defining their welfare states. The first dimension deals with the organisational principles of welfare provisions, which dovetails with the classical division between contribution-based Bismarckian and tax-financed Beveridgean welfare states. The second inspects the welfare policy emphasis in an individual regime, that is, whether the focus is on benefits for the working-age population supported by social services, or, conversely, on cash benefits for the elderly and health care. Finally, the author measures the familiar decommodifying potential, which is closely related to Esping-Andersen's original design, thereby gauging the generosity of minimum pensions, unemployment benefits, and sickness insurance schemes.

Starting with mature welfare states,

Kuitto finds that 'a certain core essence of welfare state regimes still exists. However, the boundaries of the regimes seem more blurred, as expected, and mixed traits can be observed across all clusters' (p. 161). The persistence of traditional regimes is most evident in their organisational principles. Here, Bismarckian and Beveridgean countries still resort to different financing techniques, with few exceptions (Italy and Portugal are surprisingly attached to the Beveridgean cluster). The welfare policy emphasis also closely follows the traditional classifications. The Nordic countries and the Netherlands focus on social services and working-age benefits, as opposed to Continental, Southern and most CEE countries, which cater to the elderly through both cash transfers and health services. The dimension that most acutely defies Esping-Andersen's original classification is paradoxically decommodification, the one on which most of his study is based. Here, welfare models do not differ fundamentally in their generosity across social security programmes. Consequently, they display neither overall nor programme-specific coherence, meaning that even if a scheme grants high replacement rates, the eligibility criteria may be restrictive and vice versa. As a final step, the clustering of mature welfare states across all three dimensions shows that only the Scandinavian and the Anglo-Celtic welfare states (with Finland sneaking in) are in line with the traditional ideal-types, while the Continental and Southern countries are scattered across the remaining three clusters.

As for the post-socialist countries, Kuitto arrives at two conclusions: 'the results negate the emergence of a unitary Central and Eastern European model of welfare and, instead, verify the emergence of differing hybrid models of welfare across the post-communist countries' (p. 162). CEE countries still adhere to their Bismarckian core, but they also integrate some universalist elements typical of Beveridgean or

social-democratic welfare regimes. However, the fact that they scatter across multiple clusters depending on the dimension that is looked at testifies to a fundamental lack of uniformity.

With regards to organisational principles, CEE welfare states are archetypically Bismarckian. Yet, one sub-group composed of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Slovakia, and Slovenia relies on contribution financing more strongly than the other. Most CEE countries spend less than their Western counterparts, with the notable exceptions of Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia. Their welfare policy mix is similar to conservative-corporatist countries, where catering to the elderly is prioritised. Only in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovenia is there a more even balance between old- and working-age transfers and greater focus on social services. The decommodifying potential in post-socialist countries is *prima facie* not inferior to the West—at least considering the *de jure* regulations—with the exception of minimum pensions, which provide the least generous benefits. The differences between the countries are otherwise great, with Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia being less generous, especially in terms of unemployment benefits.

Across the three dimensions, two groupings emerge. On the one hand, a proper CEE welfare cluster consisting of seven countries is characterised by lower overall generosity and a lower volume of spending, but a comparably high degree of universalism and to a certain extent sickness insurance generosity vis-à-vis mature Western welfare states. On the other hand, Hungary and Slovenia comfortably align with the Southern and conservative-corporatist models of welfare.

The technical prowess of this work is beyond doubt. Kuitto basically provides an advanced instruction guide on how to study country clusters. Beyond that, the book is laudable for filling in several gaps

that exist in the literature. First, it is one of the few studies that go beyond a case-based approach to CEE, in most instances confined to the Visegrád countries. Second, it both conceptualises and operationalises the welfare state dependent variable along three theoretically sound dimensions and measures them with the help of a new Comparative Welfare Entitlements Dataset 2 (CWED2), which the author helped to assemble. Third, it performs a comparative research of both Western and CEE democracies, thereby finally integrating them into a unified analytical framework. Fourth, it provides one of the first attempts to explain welfare state developments in CEE countries in a cross-country, time-series comparative manner. In sum, the methods employed and the findings of this book are significant both for scholars dealing with Western European, mature welfare states and for those working on post-socialist countries, who cannot but cherish the appearance of such a technically excellent contribution.

At the same time, even sophisticated analyses have their weak points and might be subject to improvement. There are three lines of criticism that ought to be mentioned.

The first concerns the author's research design choices that may have biased some of the results or rendered them prematurely obsolete. I refer, in particular, to the unavailability of pension-related data beyond that on minimum benefits. Old-age pensions often represent the backbone of the many studies on welfare regime typologies and taxonomies (see Kuitto's excellent overview on pp. 57–61), starting with Esping-Andersen's. Moreover, the research is indeed a time-series analysis, but it is based on the rather short period of 2005–2007, for which the data were collected. A broader time span, allowing for a diachronic comparison, would provide the necessary *gravitas*.

Second, some of the findings point to

the discrepancy between the *de jure*, legal implications of a welfare regime and its *de facto*, real effects on beneficiaries. As the author points out in several passages, there is a notable discrepancy between the generosity (decommodifying potential) of individual welfare programmes in CEE, whose provisions on paper are not inferior to those of mature welfare states, and the actual overall welfare spending, which is instead much lower. For these two contradictory aspects to be reconciled, an entirely different analytical take would be perhaps needed, in line with the work of Ferragina, Seeleib-Kaiser and Spreckelsen [2015], who study policy outcomes as opposed to their output.

Third, but by no means the least important criticism is the absence of a thorough political analysis. Kuitto's study provides an extraordinarily clear snapshot of where CEE welfare regimes stand in relation to themselves and to Western countries. It does not, however, even attempt to explain why a welfare regime emerges where it emerges. The disregard of the choices of individual policymakers as well as of the explanatory power of post-socialist social, economic, or political circumstances is first and foremost reflected in the absence of bibliographic references to the broader political-economy literature that emerged across the region. Consequently, the welfare regime counterpart to Bohle and Greskovits's [2012] study on the variety of capitalism in CEE countries is, regrettably, yet to be written. Kuitto's book is essential reading for the new generation of macro-comparative welfare scholars. However, the political elephant in the room relegates this otherwise admirable study to the ranks of the merely 'very good', but not 'great', contributions to our understanding of modern post-socialist societies.

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**Bernhard Weicht: *The Meaning of Care: The Social Construction of Care for Elderly People***

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Population ageing has brought care for older people into the limelight of social policy. Traditionally provided within the realm of the family, care has become a new social risk covered by public social protection systems in a number of countries. At the same time, concerns about the impact of the demand for care on the fiscal sustainability of social protection systems have led policymakers to seek to improve efficiency of care delivery by creating what Le Grand coined as 'quasi-markets' of care. In other words, care has become a commodity, bought and sold in the market. However, as Bernhard

Weicht notes in his introduction to this book, care is also a social and moral construction shaped by social structures, ideologies, and contexts. The way care is constructed socially and politically has a significant impact on how it is provided and received. It is the social and moral construction of care for older people, and in particular informal care, that this book sets out to analyse. To this end, Weicht examines a wide range of theoretical literature and uses critical discourse analysis of newspaper articles and transcripts of focus groups in Austria and England. Yet the analysis is firmly anchored around theoretical concepts. In each chapter, Weicht begins by contrasting different theoretical notions using dichotomies and subsequently attempts to synthesise these concepts or to present arguments that go beyond the dichotomies.

Weicht begins by addressing who is deemed responsible for providing care. A distinguishing feature of care is that it comprises not only tasks but also feelings of concern. Care entails building a bond or relationship, and in its idealised vision care is provided out of love rather than monetary compensation—a labour of love. At the same time, this is a strongly gendered concept. As the family is the natural space for relationships, intimacy, and reciprocal or one-sided exchanges based on affection, it is seen as the 'natural' provider of this idealised vision of care. This construction of care as a labour of love, based on a sense of vocation and even self-sacrifice is contrasted with professional carers. Here, love is seen as replaced by remuneration, and closeness by distance. The knowledge base of the professional carer and her identity (a stranger) set her apart from the informal carer. This dichotomy between informal care and professional care is challenged by the example of live-in migrant carers. Despite being remunerated, migrant carers are nonetheless regarded as fictive kin, as they are perceived to provide