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The Place of National Systems of Social Protection and Political Representation in Socio-Economic Regulation: A Morphogenetic Structuralist View on Institutional Change in Comparative Perspective with Special References to Japan and France

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Abstract

The paper addresses the issue of rethinking the welfare state as a part of a broader national system of social protection (NSSP) and a mode of societal regulation. In order to overcome the theoretical limits of bottom-up comparative analysis of welfare states, one builds a structural model of such a NSSP, inspired by french “régulation” theory. In this model, the nucleus of every NSSP is composed of three specific relationships bounding the economic and the political orders to the domestic sphere via the mediation of specific institutions: first a relationship of economic consubstantiality (social insurance for example), second a relationship of political alliance with the State (the welfare-state), third a relation of protection of the domestic order (the mix of social insurance benefits and public assistance allocations that insures the reproduction of life chances of the individual in the family framework). But a fourth relation must be introduced in the model in order to loop it dynamically, namely the wage-labor relation, or more widely, the set of market coverages of domestic life (wage, fringe benefits, private insurances, savings). The model is used to obtain a logical typology and a set of ideal-types of NSSP that add to the usual threefold clustering of Welfare States a fourth type exemplified by Japan. Then, building the same type of structural model for the national system of political representation (NSPR), and examining the institutional complementarities between NSSP and NSPR, one defines different national modes of societal regulation among which the Japanese configuration of its social and political institutions appears as one of the ideal-types. Finally, focusing on the French case, one examines, through the concepts of societal coherence and hybridization, how institutional change can be grasped in the framework of this theoretical approach of societal regulation.

Keywords: welfare state, social regulation, international comparisons, institutional complementarity, structural analysis.

Introduction

International comparisons of national systems of social protection (from now on NSSP)

have grown in line with a cumulative process of knowledge widening (Ferrera, 1994). Nevertheless as Therborn (1987) already noticed 24 years ago, this process still has not produced truly theoretical outcomes. Since 1990, despite many criticisms, the ideal-types built by Esping-Andersen (1990) and the associated clustering in three worlds—liberal, conservative and social-democratic—of welfare capitalism has become a new orthodoxy, in line with the growing influence in the social sciences of the liberal common sense and the renewal of the idea of convergence of social systems. Therefore the progress of knowledge in the field has been more empirically extensive than theoretically intensive, with more countries, from the periphery as well from the core of capitalism, being included in the comparative framework.¹⁾ The etatist bias of the comparisons linked to their restriction to welfare states, despite the varying degrees of welfare stateness of the NSSPs (Flora, 1986), is an important cause of this matter of fact. Furthermore, the focus of the comparisons on public spendings and quantitative indicators and the weak attention paid to institutional forms has led them to important mismatches.

One good example of this mismatches is Japan which, according to the weakness of its welfare public spending, is still often classified, following Esping-Andersen (1990), in the liberal welfare states family with the United States. Yet Esping-Andersen (1997) has recognised that Japan was not a liberal welfare state and did not fit in his divide of the world in three regimes of welfare capitalism. He argued it is an hybrid, combining characteristics of the liberal and conservative regimes. But so doing he has introduced a logical contradiction in his theoretical framework between his central primary idea of building clusters (separate “worlds”) of countries—assuming that all the countries pertain to one or another cluster—and the idea of hybridization—implying to the contrary that some countries do not find any place in the clusters. A solution to this contradiction would be to consider Japan as a true exception—a unique case (Lipset, 1994)—which would confirm the rule (three worlds are enough because no other country can follow the Japanese road to welfare). Nonetheless this solution has been challenged by Esping-Andersen himself. More recently, in a discussion about varieties of capitalism and the labelling of non liberal market economies, Pontusson (2005) proposes another labelling of Esping-Andersen’s typology, introducing a concept of “social market economies” (including two subtypes: “scandinavian” and “continental” countries) that

¹⁾ For a very stimulant survey of the recent literature from a South American point of view, see Draibe and Riesco, 2006.

does not include Japan, despite the same author considers that Japan is a non liberal market economy. Japan, as well as France (and Italy), is then kept out of any cluster and therefore of any theorisation.

Thus, as suggested by Ragin (1994) whose “boolean analyses cast serious doubt on the idea of (only) three types of welfare capitalism”,²⁾ why not consider that Japan is an another ideal-type of welfare capitalism (Therborn, 1987), a fourth world of NSSPs that would include others East Asian countries? But this idea raises another question: can paternalistic (patronage) forms of social protection and welfare state, even when systematically moulded, be considered as a capitalist ideal-type, and not only transitional features of periods of low development of the wage-labor nexus? There are no easy answers to these questions and clearly they call for further empirical and theoretical investigation.

France also does not fit well in the “conservative-corporatist” Bismarckian cluster where it is usually classified as a member. But France cannot be considered like Japan as a foreigner in the worlds of European welfare states and their North American extensions. It pertains to these worlds and has to be considered as a true hybrid of the Bismarckian and Beveridgean traditions (Bonoli and Palier, 1995; Barbier and Théret, 2003, 2009), which definitely calls into question the idea of clustering.

Thus Japan and France, because they do not fit easily in largely accepted typologies, illustrate the theoretical problems set up by present comparative analysis when it is supported by a strictly bottom-up, european state-centered, and clustering methodology. Since “cluster analysis yield clear archetypal cores but fuzzy peripheries” (Hicks, 1991), welfare states’ clusters are instable and depending on the criteria of classification favoured. It is not surprising given the diversity of institutional forms and the multiplicity of social security and welfare fields which necessarily weaken any general typology built only upon empirical evidence. Clustering implies a restriction of the levels and criteria of comparisons, and consequently appeals for a general theory to justify such a limitation and the choice of the criteria retained. So a typology must be rooted at a level of abstraction higher than that of stylised facts and institutions, and bottom-up approach to types’ modelisation has to be linked to a top-down specification of general theoretical concepts.

The *régulation* approach has made a lot of comparative analyses of national economic systems and has introduced in economics, explicitly or implicitly, methodological rules that are close to those discussed in comparative political science, sociology and history.

²⁾ For Ragin (1994), “it is clear (...) that the diversity of pensions systems (and, by implication, welfare states) is greater than that allowed in Esping-Andersen’s tripartite scheme.”

The three most important of these rules are: 1/not to compare insulated elements but only social relations between elements and autonomous systems of these relations (see the basic relations—wage labor nexus, competition and money—and the notion of “relation of relations” used to take hold of the State and the international system); 2/not to compare these relations at the surface of their institutional phenomenal forms but at a more abstract level where the common structures of these forms can be elucidated (see the concept of accumulation regime); 3/not to compare these structures and their reproduction regimes only along their historical development but also as parts of a whole synchronic setting (see the notions of institutional complementarity and configuration of the mode of regulation).

These rules followed by the *régulation* school are an inheritance of marxist conceptualisations and structuralist methodology. But, in the social protection field, *régulation* theory could not refer to such a strong legacy. Therefore, in its first developments, it has not given special keys to catch hold of similarities and differences between the various NSSP, as well as to seize the impact of these variations on the configuration of different modes of regulation. That is why, like comparative analysis in political science and sociology, *régulation* approach carries on using mainly an empirical bottom-up and case oriented way to specify the diversity of capitalisms.

The aim of this article is to overcome these limits and to show that more general theoretical outcomes can be produced if *régulation* theory is widened to include the political and if it explicits the analytical consequences of its implicit relation to constructivist morphogenetic and methodic structuralism. To put it more precisely, in order to analyse the variety of NSSPs and its impact on the diversification of the socio-economic modes of regulation, the regulationist theoretical framework of analysis needs to include the political, and build a theory of social protection capable to ground a general typology of NSSPs. As I have already published some views on the first issue (Théret, 1992, 1994, 1997, 1998a, 1999, 2000b, 2002a, 2003, 2006), I propose here several insights on the second. In a first section, I specify the two concepts of social protection and welfare-state as forms of the social bond in modern differentiated societies. In a second section, with these concepts I build a model of the elementary structure of every NSSP, and I use a structural analysis to contextualise this model at a middle range of abstraction where deductive approach can meet the usual bottom-up ideal-types; thus I obtain a stable typology of four “harmonic models” and ideal-types of NSSP where Japan appears as the standard for one of them. In the third section, thanks to the use of the same methodology to define types of national systems of political

representation (from now on NSPR), I formulate different models of institutional complementarity between NSSP and NSPR which I put at the core of the diversity of modes of socio-economic regulation. And in the fourth and last section, building on the distinction introduced in section 2 between institutional configurations of the mode of regulation which are “harmonic” (i.e. stable and ideal-typical due to their institutional coherence) and “disharmonic”, I examine the implications of such a theoretical framework for institutional change theory, illustrating the issue by empirical references to the French disharmonic case.

1. Conceptualising National Systems of Social Protection (NSSPs) as Structures of Relations: The Concepts of Social Protection and Welfare State

As stated by Polanyi (1984), social protection in a modern capitalist society is self-protection against the risks of break up that this type of society has to bear, due to the disembeddedness of its economic order and the emergence of self-regulated market devices. The submission to market law of the labor force, which can only be a fictitious commodity, generates the need for a set of social security institutions in order to reconstruct the social bond whose previous forms have been dissolved by capitalist market forces. The autonomization of the economic order from the political, and the correlative insulation of the domestic order (family) from both have broken off the old social bond. The NSSPs act as mediation between these three new autonomous spheres of social practices — the capitalist corporation, the nuclear family and the administrative State — that participates to the reinstatement of societal cohesion. The social welfare relationships are only a partial expression of the new social bond which actually is compound of a whole set of various systems of economic, political and symbolical mediations (money, law, system of political representation, and of mass-medias of communication, etc.) (Théret, 1998b). NSSPs articulate the logics of the economic and the political at the level of economic (market and fiscal) practices. They make use of the monetary medium to insure the material conditions of biological and demographical reproduction of the human being under the forms of labor force and power force (Théret, 1994, 2006).

In order to work in that way, a NSSP has to be basically structured by three different macro-economic relations of “economic consubstantiality”, “political alliance” and “domestic protection”. The market-capitalist economic substance of social welfare under wage-earning class capitalism (“*capitalisme salarial*”) compels the state political order

to root the social administration of domestic protection within an alliance with the economic order passing by social security organisations.

1.1 The consubstantiality to the economic order of modern social protection

Whatever theoretical or historical is the point of view, the best way to bring out the new features of the modern institutions of social protection is to come back to the inaugural situation of their emergence from previous forms in the process of differentiation and growing autonomy of the capitalist economic order. The incapability of the labor market to self-adjust the wage to the needs of domestic reproduction of wage-earners in the long run, and the correlative necessity to consider the preliminary presence of non market norms and forms of distribution of income within the economic sphere itself lead to the logical conclusion that social institutions under capitalism are primarily of the same economic substance as the wage relationship (Southall, 1994). Although these institutions (patronage and capitalist paternalistic philanthropy, trade-unions, mutual funds, friendly societies, fringe benefits and so on) are not properly market institutions, they are capital-labor ones, and participate within the proper capitalist organizations to the dynamics and stabilization of the accumulation regime. Social security and wages belong to the same monetary structure of wage-earners resources allowing the management in a pure capitalist logic of the distance between domestic and economic orders (Friot, 1993). Nevertheless, it is only the first part of the story.

1.2 An alliance between economic and political orders through social security

The second part of the story is relative to the role of present-day social security organizations in the institution of an alliance between the State and capitalism. As soon as the economic order cannot be reduced to the market place and involves also non market institutions and organisations as we just put it, the empirical evidence that social protection organizations haven't remained structured by purely direct economic-domestic relationships cannot be explained by the traditional argument stating a necessary intervention of the State to make up for the market failures. One needs an explanation involving the specific place of social protection in the logic of the state political order and primarily as a requisite of reproduction of state sovereignty.

Before being institutionalized as a social system of its own in contemporary societies, the protection of the population was an attribute of sovereign powers, due to a symbolic structure as universal as the incest prohibition: the "life debt" inherited by every human being on her/his birthday. That is, coming to life, any human being is endowed with a

“life capital” whose symbolic counterpart is an indebtedness vis-à-vis what exists before and beyond life, viz the realm where is located the spring of immortality which is represented either by God, the Father, the Ancestors answerable for Tradition, and more recently the State and/or the Nation. So the temporal institutions (churches, states) credited with being the representative on earth of the heavenly bankers of life, thanks to their durability, are accounted with the sovereign power, a dual power to protect the life of the indebted as well as to arbitrarily dispose of their life (Théret, 1998a, 1999).

The development of industrial capitalism progressively undoes this traditional tie of protection immanent to religious-political sovereignty, and the life capital (under its representation as labour force) becomes more and more able to find autonomous valorization in the economic, under new monetary forms (besides the juridical ones) of capitalization of entitlements over life as money-capital, savings and insurances. To put it another way, with the differentiation of society and the emerging competitive powers of capitalism and the State, the protection of society and population gets rid of its primal unseparable religious-political-economic nature. Therefore, in order to maintain its sovereignty and legitimacy, the State has to reconstruct its original administrative relationship of control of the domestic life in a way that takes into account the new economic autonomous capacity to produce social protection. Besides the process of democratisation, the State has performed the task by “marrying” the economically consubstantial institutions of social security. The welfare-state is the institutional form of this marriage between the intermediate organizations of social security, grounded in the economic, and the political. Through it, a broader alliance between the economic and the political orders is built that allows the distribution of domestic protection according to a compromise favouring the concomitant reproduction of both splitted orders. The political may use the economic institutions of social security for its own ends, as soon as it respects the contract of alliance by which it brings in exchange its physical violence monopoly and its juridical power of control of the population. Therefore the welfare-state, as a composite and mixed form, cannot be reduced anymore to a pure form of the State (Kaufmann, 1985; Flora, 1986).

1.3 The protection of the domestic order by the welfare state

Henceforth a specific domestic protection relation appears under the form of a mixed relationship between the households and the welfare-state. This relationship is a unified but contradictory one because it links the domestic order to a couple of networking organizations, the State and the social security system; the dialectical feature of such a relation stands out clearly from its dual though unseparable content, mixing social

insurance and public assistance. For, as it can be showed (Blanchet, 1994; Renard, 1995), in the various sectoral components of the domestic protection relationship it is not possible to insulate the social insurance economic content from the public redistribution-assistance political one.

2. The Elementary Forms of Social Protection, a Theoretical Model for Comparative Analysis and the Building of a Typology of NSSPs

Let me now contextualize the concepts of NSSP and welfare-state in order to go forward in the analysis of the national diversity of modes of regulation. In order to do so, I use in a specific way the methodology of structural analysis that Claude Lévi-Strauss applied for his own sake to the kinship systems in undifferentiated societies. I do it for various reasons, but the overwhelming one is that the Lévi-Strauss' analysis of kinship systems is an example, perhaps the only one of its kind, of comparative analysis articulating both top-down and bottom-up approaches to the classification of social systems. Another important reason for building upon it is that one can assume a structural homology between the NSSP in wage-earners societies, and the kinship system in undifferentiated societies, thanks to their equivalent reproductive and cohesive role in these societies. A third argument for such a transfer of technology is the common intellectual relationship of Lévi-Strauss and *régulation* theory with Marx that explains the shared support of both for the three methodological rules I recalled above (Théret, 1997, 2003).

Given this background, we first elaborate the formula of an “elementary form of social protection” to stylise the morphogenetic structure which links together the three foregrounded relations, thanks to the introduction of a fourth relationship closing the whole structure: the wage labor/capital relationship. Second, from a structural analysis using the pairs of oppositions linking its four terms, I deduce a series of formal types of this elementary form of social protection, and among them, I pull out four “harmonic models” of NSSP. Three of these harmonic models can be considered as the equivalents of the inductive ideal-types found in the comparative literature on welfare states: the liberal USA, the conservative Germany, and the social-democratic Sweden. But there is a value added by the deductive method: Japan appears as an illustration of a fourth harmonic model of NSSP.

2.1 Capitalist coverage of domestic reproduction and the molecule of social protection

The value-added by Lévi-Strauss (1947–2002, 1954–1973) to the theory of kinship systems mainly resides in the overwhelming role he gives to the maternal uncle, a fourth

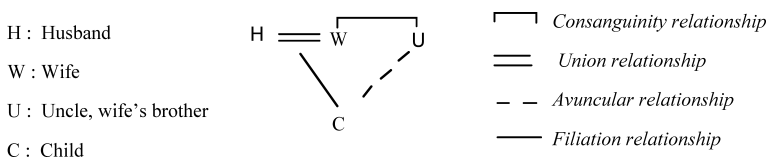


Fig. 1. Elementary structure of kinship systems.

term he introduces in the elementary structure of kinship previously reduced to only three —the father, the mother or father’s wife and the child—. For Lévi-Strauss, as soon as prevails the incest taboo, the prohibition of consanguineous sexual relations requires that family reproduction passes through relations of marriage and alliance between non consanguineous groups. The result is the surge in the structure of kinship of an avuncular relationship—or avunculate—between the mother’s brother and the son, according to the role of the former as the male representative of the group giving a woman to the group of the father and consequently invested of a power of control on the offspring of the marriage. The avunculate loops the elementary structure (“atom”) of kinship by articulating the three others relations of consanguinity (brother-sister), marriage (husband-wife) and filiation (parents-children) in a way that participates to the genealogical reproduction of the two allied groups (see Fig. 1).

The structural homology I assume between kinship and social protection in the respective societies where they are worth as elements of “life capital” social reproduction allows us to consider that the wage labor-capital relationship plays in the NSSP a role similar or equivalent to the role of the avunculate in the kinship system. Therefore, rooting the NSSP within the process of genealogical reproduction of the domestic order enlightens the fact that the direct labor-capital relation and the other private economic forms (derived from wages) of meeting the needs of domestic reproduction (fringe benefits, individual insurance and personal savings)—I group the whole set in the reduced expression of capitalist (or market) coverage relationship of domestic reproduction—, are a first order component of the NSSP that ensures the closure as well as the dynamic looping of its elementary structure. Thus a NSSP will be correctly displayed as a system if it involves not three but four different relations linked together along a circuit of monetary flows of domestic protection and whose interdependencies can be designed in an elementary structure or “molecule” of social protection (see Fig. 2).³⁾

³⁾ I call it a molecule, and not an atom, because it represents a complex body whose elements linked together are not single physical persons but macro-entities, i.e. sets of organisations.

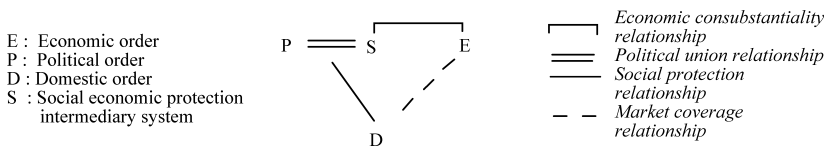


Fig. 2. Elementary structure of national systems of social protection.

According to the model, the monetary flows of social protection [from E to (P=S) to D] become collective means of consumption (Théret, 1982) in the domestic order where they reproduce the “life capital” of individuals and so participate to the formation of their socially acknowledged values in the economic order (through the labor market and employment in capitalist organizations). Thus the wage is both the starting and the arrival point of the capitalist circuit of social protection, and depending on the way it is fixed, it ensures (or does not, but then there is crisis) the internal and dynamic coherence of NSSP. Consequently it is not possible to grasp a NSSP in the only synchronical dimension where market incomes and monetary flows of social protection are in opposition as alternative forms of domestic economic reproduction. They must also be seized in their dynamic complementary through which they reciprocally are engendered one by the other and derive one from the other.

2.2 Harmonic models of NSSP: a typology

In the molecule of social protection, S (social security organizations) and D (families) are intermediary and mixed elements, integrating simultaneously in their functioning both economic and political logics. Therefore they cannot be simultaneously close (there would be social indifferentiation) or distant (there would be no social cohesion possible) from the economic and the political which are contradictory poles. If they are closer to one pole (for example the economic), they have to be more distant from the other (to say the political), and vice versa. The ideal state for their autonomy and mediating efficiency is maintaining an equal distance to both the economic and the political.

More generally the dynamic stability of such a system of social protection implies the institutional regulation of three binary synchronic oppositions. First, there is a structural opposition between the economic consubstantiality relation between the economic and social security organisations (D-S) and the relation of covenant (S=P) between the latter and the political, which is constitutive of the welfare-state. The nature of institutionnalised compromises between these two relations determines the “degree of welfare stateness” (Flora, 1986) of the NSSP.

Then, the relation of social protection by the welfare state of the domestic sphere

[(S=P)—D], and the market (capitalist) coverage relation of domestic reproduction are also in a synchronical opposition. The institutionnalised compromise between the two relations which fixes their respective shares in the “life capital” economic reproduction determines the “degree of decommodification” (Esping-Andersen, 1990) of the labor force and domestic life.

In the formula of the molecule, these oppositions for each pair of relationships can be symbolised by the signs (+) and (–), a sign (+) for a relation indicating a closeness between its elements or a high intensity of their tie being always balanced by a sign (–) for the adjacent relation indicating a weak and few intensive link.

Lastly, the regime of reproduction of NSSPs depends on the historical and cultural societal context in which it is embedded. I assume as a first approximation that an elementary way to grasp such a context is to refer to a third binary opposition between more holistic versus more individualistic societies. More holistic countries privilege the community and the family, putting in the foreground a logic of needs in the distribution of income; social protection is here a determining variable of the economic dynamics. Conversely, more individualistic nations build on the idea of a society being the contractual or unintended result of individual wants, privileging a logic of individual value and egotist achievement and performance in the distribution of income; social protection is there a variable of adjustment in the economic dynamics.

Nonetheless, if in more individualistic contexts economic requisites prevail over those of domestic reproduction in the determination of the capitalist or market coverage, they can be ensured by a labor market which is more (as in Germany) or less (as in the United States) ruled by corporativist arrangements. As for more holistic cases where domestic requisites take advantage over the pure market logic in the capitalist coverage relation; domestic requisites can be taken into account either directly by capitalist corporations (as in the extended “ie” system in Japan (Yoichi and Sautter, 1990), or at a national scale within the labor-market regime (as in the social-democratic Sweden where life capital is seen as a social capital and a crucial economic resource for a small national community which has to face a competitive world market (Mahon, 1994; Pontusson, 1992)).

In the formula of the molecule, this third type of variable can be endogenized by giving a direction (symbolized by an arrow in Fig. 3) to the market (capitalist) coverage relation that points to the way the social protection regime dynamically loops. Therefore, structural analysis using the combination of the three binary oppositions detailed above allows to deduce eight (2^3) possible formal regimes of NSSP. It is possible to show that these different regimes are congruent with many of the outcomes of the comparative

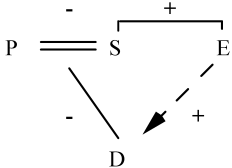
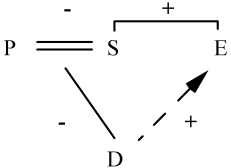
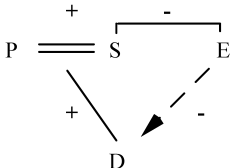
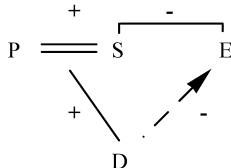
<i>Societal context</i> <i>Degrees of welfare stateness and decommodification</i>	<i>Individualistic</i> <i>Primacy of individual liberty to contract over distributive equality</i> <i>Achievement-performance meritocratic logic</i>	<i>Holistic</i> <i>Primacy of distributive equality and community over liberty</i> <i>Logic of needs</i>
<i>Weak</i>	<u>Individualistic liberal</u> Market centered  USA	<u>Paternalistic liberal</u> Firm centered  JAPAN
<i>Strong</i>	<u>Individualistic corporatist</u> Civil society centered  GERMANY	<u>Societal corporatist</u> State centered  SWEDEN

Fig. 3. From ideal-types of welfare states to harmonic models of NSSPs.

literature on welfare states relative either to ideal-types (USA, Germany and Sweden) or to “deviant cases” (Australia, Italy, Low Countries and United Kingdom—as Ferrera (1994) called them) (Théret, 1997). It is not surprising because the empirical criteria drawn from evidence and used to classify the welfare-states in that literature are theoretically reproduced by the various combinations of our three binary oppositions ruling the elementary structure of NSSPs.

But the deductive logic of structural analysis supplies also a distinction between “harmonic” and “disharmonic” models (borrowed also from Lévi-Strauss) that leads to reduce to four the number of stable configurations of national social protection. Figure 3 displays these deductive four harmonic models whose three look like a structural stylisation of the three “classical” ideal-types of welfare state already mentioned, and the fourth can be exemplified by Japan. These harmonic models are defined as molecular

structures presenting a vertical redundancy of signs in their horizontal oppositions, which seems a logical condition for their institutional coherence and dynamic viability. In other words, the viability of harmonic models in the long run is based on the coherence between their degree of welfare stateness and their degree of decommodification. For, as a high degree of welfare stateness reduces the protective potential of the rest of the system, its combination with a weak decommodified social protection will generate destabilizing forces at the level of the domestic reproduction as well as concerning the legitimisation of the State, what will push either in the direction of a weaker welfare-state or a stronger social protection, depending on the relative strength of individualism and holism in the country. Conversely, a weak but costly welfare state will generate tendencies either to its bureaucratization or to the reduction of its costs, depending again on the individualism/holism balance. Therefore the disharmonic molecules (not represented in Fig. 3 but which can also be used as stylisations of concrete “deviant cases” as seen above), because they are less stable than the four harmonic models, are dynamically attracted by them.

In Fig. 3, one sees that the North American US liberal “residual” archetype of welfare-state matches a meritocratic individualistic-liberal (market centered) model of NSSP where the civil society, including in that case the market sphere, faces in a pluralist way a State seen as a pure Léviathan. As for the German “conservative-corporatist” (Esping-Andersen) or “industrial achievement-performance” (Titmuss, 1974) model of welfare-state, it matches a meritocratic individualistic-corporatist (civil society centered) model of NSSP, where the dominant autonomous economic logic of capitalism and individual achievement moulds a strong public commitment into the distribution of income in a corporatist way; the *Sozialstaat* faces the economic order according to a conservative institutionnalised compromise usually labelled “social market economy”. The same type of equivalence is worth regarding the “institutional redistributive” Swedish “social-democratic” ideal-type which fits in with a holistic societal-corporatist (State centered) NSSP where a national community faces a world market dependent capitalism, in the limits of a societal “neo-corporatist” compromise between economic and political orders.

The fourth ideal-type that I deduce from the structural analysis, the Japanese type, has not been qualified as so in the comparative literature on welfare states (see nonetheless Therborn, 1987), perhaps because it holds simultaneously liberal and conservative features, what seems a contradiction *in adjecto*.⁴⁾ However, from a structural point of

⁴⁾ See our previous remarks on the Esping-Andersen’s qualification of Japan as a hybrid, and Pontusson’s one as a non type, non liberal as well as non social.

view, it is a coherent holistic paternalistic-liberal (firm centered) model characterized by a weak welfare state (of the liberal residual type) and a strong domestic protection (of the holistic conservative type) met by capitalist corporations in a paternalistic way (patronage) which shapes the labor and the economic coverage relation; there, the economic community—including the domestic order—faces a State primarily committed to the improvement of the international economic competitiveness of the national economic order.

In summary, the structuralist comparative methodology leads to three outcomes which, in my view, can be considered as a significant value-added : 1/it confirms at a theoretical level the pertinence of the three ideal-types—liberal, conservative and social-democratic—of welfare states and extends their significance to the whole systems of social protection, including private and corporate coverages; 2/it introduces on a theoretical basis in the comparative framework a fourth world of welfare capitalism symbolised by the case of Japan; 3/it implies that the idea of clustering is methodologically flawed and empirically improperly reductive, according to the overwhelming presence of deviant cases and disharmonic models which are better grasped with the concept of hybridization.

However the way I made use of this methodology till now has several limitations and has to be enlarged in order to tackle the issues of socio-economic regulation and institutional change that are the topics of the two following sections. Indeed I considered that the stability and dynamic viability of a NSSP were only resting on its internal coherence, and I have integrated societal effects on its dynamics in a quite simplistic way: these effects have been reduced to the impact of societal values (the hegemonic discursive regime) on the hierarchy between capitalist market economic and “life capital” domestic logics that are competing at the core of NSSPs’ dynamics. But societal effects are much more complex and difficult to tackle on account of the diversity of the systems of mediation between the economic and the political orders, and correlatively of the multiplicity of interferences between all these systems. Here is at stake the issue of institutional complementarity.

Seen as a regulatory alliance between the economic and the political, the NSSP’s reproduction regime, as for other social mediations (money, law, political interests’ representation, etc.), has to deal with a structural contradiction lying at its core. On the one hand, it must be flexible to absorb and correct in the short run the undermining effects on the social cohesion of the political and economic logics left to themselves. On the other hand, it must be crystallized into institutions to ensure in the long term the

stability of societal regulation. Such a contradiction can never entirely be solved within the boundaries of the sole NSSP, the whole set of systems of mediation which are crucial components of the mode of regulation being involved according to a general complementarity and substitutability between them. Therefore in order to address the question of the relation between NSSPs and societal modes of regulation, at least two theoretical developments are necessary.

The first development concerns the relation of NSSPs with money and law. For it is crystal clear that a social protection regime is depending on the monetary regime since the former is a regime of (secondary) distribution of the money produced and distributed primarily by the monetary system. And it is also crystal clear that NSSPs depend on juridical regimes which define rights and duties and rule their application (labor law, social law, corporate regulations, etc.). Monetary and juridical regimes have an influence on a NSSP which has to be endogenized as a variable in its dynamics in a similar way as tried above for the ideological regime. But comparative researches in these domains are very scarce and partial, surely because of the disciplinary division of knowledge in the social sciences. Moreover, in first approximation, one can assume that there is a substantive coherence or correlation between the three ideological, monetary and juridical regimes whose societal effect on NSSPs is, at the level of abstraction where I stay in this paper, not too badly reported by the binary distinction I made between an individualist logic of achievement and a holistic logic of needs. For these two reasons, I shall not go further in that direction here.

Thus, I shall favour an externalist way of addressing the place of the NSSP in the mode of socio-economic regulation, and focus on the relations between social protection and political representation, an issue already extensively informed about by the inductive comparative literature. These relations can be said external because a NSSP is primarily an economic system built upon money, since a national system of political representation (NSPR) is a political one built upon Law. The study of the conditions of institutional complementarity between these two societal mediations directly introduces into the analysis of the very making of socio-economic regulation.

3. The Diversity of Socio-economic Modes of Regulation in the Light of Institutional Complementarity between Social Protection and Political Representation.

In order to build a model of institutional complementarity between NSSPs and NSPRs, I first apply to NSPRs the same kind of analysis and stylisation as for the NSSPs, which

allows me, in a second stage, to display a series of configurations of complementarity between the two systems which may be considered as different modes of socio-economic regulation.

3.1 Elementary stylisation of National Systems of Political Representation and agregtion of economic and political interests (NSPRs)

The analysis of NSPRs raises conceptual problems which are similar to those encountered in the case of NSSPs. Both appears in our modern differentiated societies as mediations between the economic and the political, and both are concerned by the evolution of an autonomous domestic order which cannot be directly controlled anymore, but nevertheless must be ruled so as to allow the two processes of accumulation of economic wealth (under the form of capital) and political power (under the form of the state) (Théret, 1994, 2006). This is why I assume a homomorphic transformation from one concept to the other, and elaborate a model and a typology of the former using the theoretical categories and methodology already used for the latter.

The transposition of the structural analysis of NSSPs to NSPRs only requires to reverse, in moving from economy to politics, on the one hand the position of the consubstantiality and union relationships linking the mediation system to the economic and political orders (see Fig. 4), and to substitute on the other hand the juridical medium of communication to the monetary one.⁵⁾

The whole set of institutions of political representation (R)—in concrete terms the overlapping of a system of political parties and other forms of agregtion of private interests (such as corporatist arrangements), and a system of representative government—is consubstantial to the political and only in a union relationship (R=E) with the economic order. A NSPR can mediate between private and public interests because it emerges from the internal differentiation of the political between a civic political constituency and a bureaucratic administrative constituency (Tocqueville), differentiation which is correlative of the foreseen crisis of the traditional forms of sovereignty which has been induced by the emergence of an autonomous (vis-à-vis the

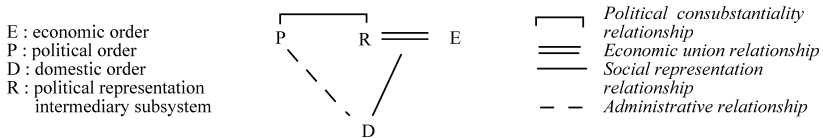


Fig. 4. Elementary structure of NSPR.

⁵⁾ For more details about this stylisation of political representation, see Théret (1998a).

State) capitalism. Henceforth institutions of political representation are necessary to legitimate the administrative logic of control and management of the population (which is now the ideological anchor of the sovereign power); they are mobilized by the State to reconstruct its direct ties (P–D) to individuals and economic forces. Reciprocally, these forces can take advantage of these institutions for their own ends to enter the State.

Hence a political alliance between the political and the economic supported by this mixed institutions representing and aggregating economic as well as political interests [P-R=E]. Hence too a new politico-juridical relation between the domestic and the economic and political orders [(R=E)-D]. This new relation of civil citizenship is both a relation of social representation of individuals (subjective rights) and a relation of socialization and political protection (objective “civil” entitlements transformed via R in “civic” citizenship’s ones). Moreover as regarding social protection and market coverage relationships, this civil citizenship relation and the administrative bond (P–D) are in a dual relation of synchronic substitutability and dynamic mutual determination within the circuit of reproduction of the system. At last, the structural play of binary oppositions between adjacent relationships can also be used to define various harmonic and disharmonic models of NSPR in line with ideal-types found in the comparative literature.

3.2 NSSPs, NSPRs, and configurations of socio-economic regulation

However, in this article, I am not looking for such a typology *per se*. I am *a priori* more interested in examining the combinations or articulations of the NSSP with the NSPR, in order to deduce a diversity of models and ideal-types of the modes of regulation which can stylise the role of social protection within societal regulation. The articulation of the two elementary structures is outlined in Fig. 5.

To understand this figure, two others elements of social topology need to be recalled, the symbolical institutional forms of the Market (M) and the Nomos (N).⁶⁾ One has seen

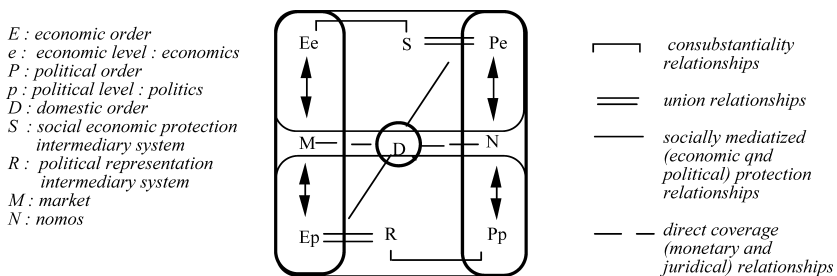


Fig. 5. Elementary structure of societal regulation.

⁶⁾ For more details on social topology, see Théret, 1992, 1994 or 2006.

that a NSSP and a NSPR mobilize respectively two different registers or spheres of the economic and political orders that are economy (e)—the level of practices of management of human beings/things relations, and politics (p)—the level of practices of management of interhuman relations. Therefore the articulation between these two systems raises the issue of the symbolic transformation of political practices into economic practices in both economic and political orders and vice versa, condition of their unity and viability. It is the Market (M) (as a price fixing system) which ensures this symbolic function in the economic order, transforming reciprocally—thanks to the mediation of money—political rights and duties of individuals into economic rights and duties via the recognition and fixation of a monetary value to their havings (labor force and the various forms of capital). In the political order, the same type of transformation is ensured by the *Nomos* (N), that is to say the system of “central authorities of nomination” (Bourdieu, 1995) one can label also the “Great book of the public debt” (Théret, 1994). These institutions of nomination recognize and state juridically the political value of individuals, their power force from the point of view of the State, and so doing establish equivalences between social entitlements upon the economic fiscal resources of the State and citizenship rights within the State political sphere.

From the stylisation displayed in Fig. 5 of an elementary form of societal regulation (which assumes a good functioning of the whole system of relations and corresponding institutions), one can elaborate on the diversity of modes of societal regulation regarded here, for the sake of simplicity, as modes of correlation between a NSSP and a NSPR. By duplicating the structural analysis applied to the NSSP, one obtains from the two binary oppositions structuring every NSPR—oppositions between (Ep=R) and (Pp-R) on the one hand, [(Ep=R)-D] and [(Pp-N)-D] on the other hand—, four models whose combinations with the foreseen models of NSSP give thirty two possible configurations of regulation. But Fig. 6 displays only the eight ones built from the harmonic models of NSSP, and after elimination of the endogenised binary contextual variable (individualistic versus holistic) referred to the value system.⁷⁾

As soon as socio-economic regulation is laid down in terms of societal coherence between the NSSP and the NSPR, we can logically deduce harmonic models of modes of regulation by assuming oppositions of signs in the two pairs of relationships linking the

⁷⁾ I assume now that societal effects are better described by the introduction of the different configurations of NSPR. In other words, what was assumed to construct endogenous models of NSSP should now be induced from a confrontation to social facts of more complex configurational models deduced without this assumption.

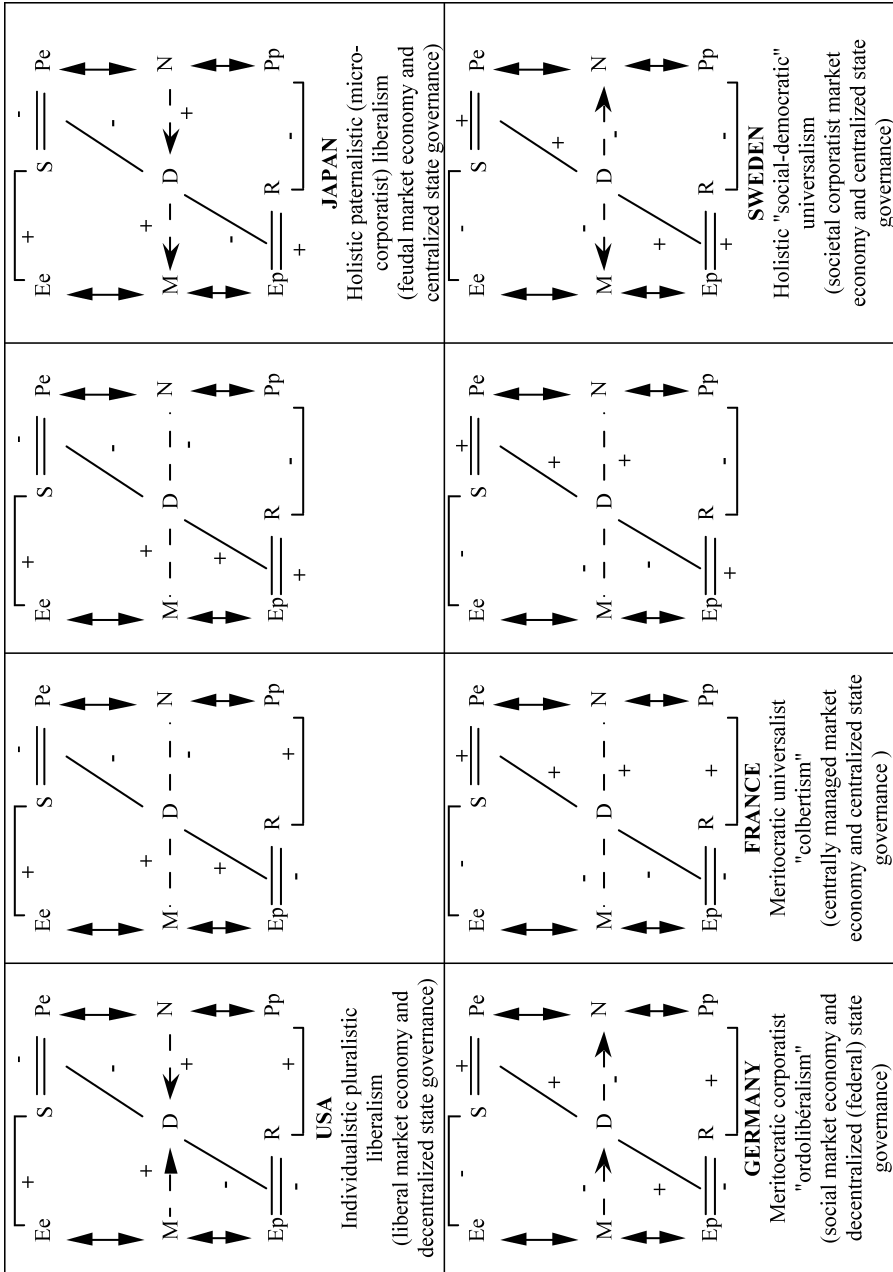


Fig. 6. Societal Coherence between Political Representation and Social Welfare Systems.

domestic sphere to the economic and the political respectively with regards to two conditions:

— the political management of D via the NSPR must not be contradictory with its economic management via the NSSP;

— both must be in simultaneous accordance with the capital accumulation and the State fiscal regimes, and the two relations linking the domestic to the economic order (or to the political) must not be simultaneously strong for the whole system to be harmonic. For instance, a sign (+) in both relations (E_e-D , via M) and (E_p-D , via R) indicates a too strong link between the economic and the domestic, and a high risk of breakdown of social cohesion as a result of the correlative too large weakness of the political order. The same reasoning is worth for two signs (–) indicating a too large weakness of the economic.

This conditions sustain the choice of the four already selected harmonic NSSPs as ideal-types of coherent national modes of regulation also. We can therefore make the following remarks about these four “models”:

— Individualist meritocratic countries as USA or Germany display a weak ($E_p=R$) relationship, corresponding to a pluralistic political market and/or a decentralized political system (federalism) which reduces political influence of economic organized interests as such. Hence the economic lobbies’ political role. Holistic countries to the contrary are acquainted with a strong ($E_p=R$) relationship, that is to say either a strong presence of labor trade unions in the State as in the case of Sweden and its neo-corporatist system, or a strong presence of business as for the case of Japan and its system of merging capitalist groups and State bureaucracy (Chung, 1990).

The strength of the civil citizenship relation [$(E_p=R)-D$] is high in our four countries when the social domestic protection relationship is strong (Germany and Sweden) and low in the opposite cases (USA and Japan). But this figure can be combined with ($E_p=R$) either weak (pluralistic — decentralized) or strong (neo-corporatist — centralized) according to the fact there is no necessary transformation of collective representation of civil interests into public civic representation (Boismenu, 1994).

The [$(D-(N-Pp))$] relationship is a direct link of the individual to the State, that is either a bureaucratic administrative bond, as in the liberal logic of “passive” or “statutory citizenship” (Balibar, 1995) (USA⁸⁾ and Japan), or a link of more direct civic citizenship as in countries where “active” or “egalitarian citizenship” (ibid.) is considered as a

⁸⁾ Which are no more in the situation of the first half of nineteenth century Tocqueville described them.

condition for democracy (Germany and Sweden).⁹⁾ This direct relation will be all the more strong since the relation of civil citizenship is weak. If that strength matches a weak ($E_p=R$) relationship, it means an insulation of the political system and problems of legitimacy in a liberal configuration. In that typically US case, the political system holds a weak reforming power of the society and has to mobilize other resources of legitimization such as a powerful liberal possessive individualist ideology propped up by a high social mobility, and a military and monetary hegemony in the world system. If, conversely, the strength of $[(D-(N-Pp))]$ matches a strong ($E_p=R$) relationship, it means that institutions of representation of interests tend to exclude domestic and wage-earners ones (insulation of civil rights in the private sphere) and are mainly monopolized by business and other dominant groups. It is the case of Japan where “feudal” capitalist firms are strongly tied to the State bureaucracy who organizes the political control of the population in close relation with its economic management within big capitalist corporations (Yamamuro, 1990).¹⁰⁾

The weak representation of domestic interests in the political system and the correlative strong administrative link of the individual or the family to the State in the US and Japan fit in with a weak welfare-state ($P_e=S$) and a strong market or firm coverage of the domestic needs (E_e-D). Nonetheless, the two countries structurally differ according to the relations between capitalism and the State, and, as one has seen in the previous section, to the place of the domestic logic of reproduction in the whole system of regulation. In Japan, in politics as well in the economy, the holistic logic of the business corporation as a community prevails over the market logic, whereas, in the United States, the logics of individual achievement and market have an overwhelming room even in the public political life. On the other hand, in countries with strong welfare-states like Germany and Sweden, a weaker coverage of the domestic reproduction by the market and the corporation matches a strong civil representation and a weaker direct presence of the individual in the State, even if (and may be because) a democratic conception of that presence prevails over the administrative view. But, here

⁹⁾ In the first case, we designed in figure 6 an arrow going from N to D (administrative primacy) whereas in the second case we draw the arrow from D to N (democratic polity primacy).

¹⁰⁾ Following Chung (1990), the absence of trade-union representation in the system of government is a specific feature of Japanese neo-corporatism compared to other countries. The State does not consider it has to intervene directly to control the trade unions, the corporations and employers doing the job pretty well. The Japanese neo-corporatism is restricted to employers and does not have the societal dimension of the Swedish one. The question is then: can we still speak of neo-corporatism? Following Boyer (2002), one has to speak of “meso-corporatism.”

again, both countries diverge according to the strength of the neo-corporatist relation ($E_p=R$), weak in “ordoliberal” Germany (Lehmbruch, 1994) and strong in the social-democratic Swedish case of societal corporatism.

In summary, the zero degree of the welfare-state which is characteristic of the USA fits with a highly differentiated society that does not mobilized many and/or sophisticated social systems of mediation like social security, health system and institutionalized political representation, the societal coherence being grounded in this country within direct economic and political relations to the domestic sphere, primary media such as money and law, and a strong liberal possessive individualism supported by the mass-medias of communication. Conversely, the institutional constructivism of Sweden is striking, for the Swedish mode of regulation is fully integrated in an elaborate architecture of social mediations, a powerful welfare-state at the economic level being duplicated by a brought to a top neo-corporatist political system. The German and Japanese cases seem to be two other mutually opposite ideal-types even if they are also two examples of intermediary models of societal integration. Germany privileges social integration at the economic and monetary level via a strong welfare-state though it is not a holistic country; Japan privileges social cohesion via the integration at the political level of large corporations in charge of domestic protection.

Therefore harmonic societal regulations might be obtained through contradictory articulations of NSSP and NSPR. Whereas the USA and Sweden look homogeneous from this point of view in spite of there opposite position vis-à-vis social constructivism — their (negative and positive respectively) forms of social mediations at economic and political levels are redundant —, Germany and Japan show heterogeneity of both forms though in a reverse way: strong economic and weak political mediations in spite of a powerful corporatism for the former; weak economic and strong political mediations in spite of a weak labor corporatism for the latter.

But the world is not limited to these “models”. If we take them as references, most of the countries appears as deviant cases, hybrids and disharmonic models, whose viability in the long run is permanently threatened by a weak institutional complementarity. Nevertheless virtue may become vice when change is at stake. Harmonic configurations and straight conformity in dynamics to their ideal-typification tend to limit the capacity of model countries to adapt to changes in their external context. They are enclosed in their virtuous trajectories, and if they are not dominant, if they do not say the law and impose it, their capacity of adaptation is logically weaker than that of hybrid countries which are not enclosed in a unique path dependency, and can mobilize an enlarged

repertoire of institutional resources to face change. Let's now develop this point and illustrate it with the case of the French hybrid.

4. Hybridization and Institutional Change: The French Lesson

Before coming to the French case, let's first justify its entrance on the stage by coming back to an important issue in comparative methodology, what can be called the drift from typology to clustering.

4.1 Hybridization versus clustering

I have mentioned above, in the introduction of this paper, that the notion of cluster is contradictory with the category of "hybridization" and theoretically does not leave any room to the idea of deviant cases. As soon as we recognize the existence of institutional hybrids, the idea of clustering appears as a deadlock. *A fortiori*, cluster analysis is too static to make room for differences between members of a same cluster which may be crucial for their respective dynamics of change. Rather than strictly matching one or the other ideal-types "hybrid" welfare states and NSSPs combine characters of them. Dynamic trajectories indeed involve new combinations of these characters. As clustering dramatically reduces each country's institutional complexity which underpins the real changes, it is misleading when changes and institutional innovations are at stake, moments where "little differences" can matter more than blinding similarities. Two examples: with a cluster approach how shall we understand that Germany has adopted a new social insurance for old-age dependency whereas France has chosen an assistance scheme, although both countries are thought to be members of the same Bismarckian cluster? And how to explain that belated Latin-rim also classified as continental conservative welfare states recently adopted national universal healthcare systems of the Beveridgean type instead of Bismarckian ones?

Actually clustering is an obstacle to the understanding of changes in NSSPs since it interprets path dependency as unique, despite the diversity of institutional inheritances which characterizes the hybrid countries. Assuming that there is only one path of change inscribed in the very institutional structure of a country by its "family" belonging — the path followed by the ideal-type —, cluster analysis cannot take hold of the fact that several paths are opened to countries that have not fully coherent systems of social protection and political representation. Correlatively institutions inherited from the past are viewed only as obstacles to change, not as political resources for institutional innovation. Reasoning on institutional change at the level of clusters of welfare states or NSSPs inevitably implies that important features of the hybrid cases are underestimated

or even ignored, however determining they might be.

Indeed comparative method does not imply resorting to clustering. The limited series of ideal-types it provides can be used as a comparative framework of reference within which each case can be located without being reduced to one or another ideal-type. The above structural analyses, which confirm that the inductive ideal-types of the literature are stable models, lead to the selection of a limited number of structural variables which are not discrete but continuous. Henceforth they allow to follow rigorous procedures to build a framework of reference endowed with quantitative norms of measure of distances between and from ideal-types, and where every case can be situated, described and evaluated by its coordinates. I give now a more precise idea of such procedures for the simple case of NSSPs, before coming to the hybrid character of the French case.

For the construction of a standardized space of measuring, one can first define three independent axes corresponding to the three binary variables used to differentiate the NSSPs. Then one can elaborate norms of measure on each axe in accordance with a scale of value determined by the relative positions on these axes of the four ideal-types. Thus, one axis will represent the degree of welfare stateness (relative to the intensity of P=S vis-à-vis E-S), and whose norm of measure can be fixed up by reference to the opposition between the USA (the more liberal, minimum degree equalized to 0) and Sweden (the more under state control, maximum degree equalized to 1). The second axis will represent the degree of decommodification of the labor force, with a norm of distance defined according to the opposition between the USA (the more market and equality of opportunity oriented, degree 0) and Germany (the more corporatist and status oriented, degree 1).¹¹⁾ At last the third axis will concern the degree of residual holism and importance of the needs' logic on the labor market and the wage-labor nexus, with a standard defined in accordance to the opposition between the USA (the most individualistic, degree 0) and Japan (the most holistic, degree 1). More precisely, as displayed in Fig. 7, one can assume that a zero degree (0, 0, 0) for a NSSP is the privilege of the liberal American model, when the degree maximum (1, ~1, ~1) is obtained by the Swedish social-democratic model, with coordinates for Germany (the most decommodified) and Japan (the most holistic) being respectively (~1, 1, ~0) et (~0, ~0, 1). Thus, assuming that ratings x, y and z can be built for all the countries and

¹¹⁾ I assume here that the Swedish labor force is not the most decommodified as usually considered, according to its higher participation of women in the labor market. In other words familialist welfare states have a labor force less commodified than social-democratic ones according to the higher proportion of wage earners in the latters.

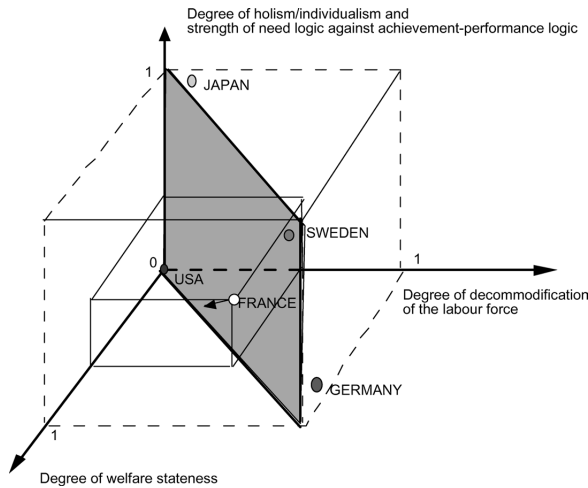


Fig. 7. A standardized tridimensional comparative space for NSSPs.

the three variables, every country can be situated at any time in this comparative space (a cube), thanks to the computation of its coordinates $(x_i - x_{us}) / (x_{sw} - x_{us})$, $(y_i - y_{us}) / (y_{ge} - y_{us})$ et $(z_i - z_{us}) / (z_{ja} - z_{us})$.¹²⁾

Since the ideal-types are supposedly harmonic models granted with stability and viability in the long run, this standardized comparative space is itself relatively stable, which means that it is possible to design in such a space the historical trajectories of evolution and institutional change of each NSSP, relatively to ideal-types. This point is illustrated in Fig. 7 by the case of the French NSSP which appears in the light of our structural analysis as an institutional hybrid and a deviant case of conservative-corporatist Bismarckism (see also above Fig. 6 for the specificity of the French societal mode of regulation).

4.2 The French case: hybridization and institutional change

In comparative research the French “Welfare State” has traditionally been grouped with the German one in the “conservative-corporatist” cluster of welfare regimes grouping countries mainly influenced by what is usually (though improperly) called the Bismarckian model of social insurances. In my view, as already suggested above, this assimilation of France with Germany, despite its usefulness at several levels of analysis, is globally methodologically and empirically flawed.

¹²⁾ Indexes ge, ja, sw and us are respectively relative to Germany, Japan, Sweden and the USA.

France actually has been ignored during a long time by the international comparative literature on the welfare state. It is not before the second half of the nineties that a series of informed researches has been produced and been available to compare the French Social Protection System (FSPS) with other systems.¹³⁾ These studies have put in light some important features which contrast it with the German type. In the area of family policies for example, the French system rather looks like the “Nordic” social-democratic Beveridgean regime (Schultheis, 1996; Martin, 1998). The French welfare state has indeed adequately been described as a Bismarckian system with Beveridgean objectives (Bonoli and Palier, 1995), the term Beveridgean referring here to three features—universality, unity and uniformity—common to the liberal and social-democratic models. This reflects the fact that French *Etat-providence* internalizes a political and symbolical opposition between corporatism and republican universalism which is crucial for the understanding of the whole functioning of the French society.

Now, considered at the level of the national system of social protection and not only at the level of the sole welfare state, the French case is still much more discordant from the German ideal-type because many other French social institutions are at odds with the Bismarckian model. For example, “paritarism” is deprived of a functional equivalent for the German industrial relations system (Tixier, 1998). French trade unions are divided and very weak; contrary to their German counterparts, they have no substantial say in firms’ decisions. French labor law, as part of a “social public order” is rooted in universal political rights rather than a wage earner status, as in the German model (Mückenberger and Supiot, 1999). Social rights thus appear more to compensate for a democratic deficit than to complement labor’s economic rights. Because of the division within the trade union movement and the powers of state social bureaucracy, paritarism between business and labor has often been more conventional than substantial (Catrice-Lorey, 1997). In addition, the French educational system (seldom considered in France as part of the social protection system) is built on “liberal republican”—akin to Beveridgean, solidaristic and/or egalitarian principles (Kott, 1996; Bec, 1999). Its limited vocational training capacity shows a stark contrast with the German system (Maurice *et al.*, 1982; Verdier, 2000). Consequently whereas Bismarckian features (namely, social insurance, “weak stateness”, fragmentation) constantly prevailed throughout the welfare state’s building stages, Beveridgean principles were also at work, and their increasing influence within the dominantly Bismarckian welfare state has resulted in growing internal tension.

¹³⁾ See for instance Merrien (1997), Palier (1999), Barbier and Théret (2003, 2004, 2009), Théret 2002a.

This is particularly clear with family policies, the transformation of family patterns eroding the legitimacy of social insurance principles to finance flat rate universal allowances.

But the FSSP has also faced the external challenges of the internationalization of the economy and the polity which have destabilized the compromises between actors matching the hybridized Beveridgean/Bismarckian framework. And as internal and external challenges emerged, the Beveridgean features of the societal regulation somehow acted as resources allowing for new potential compromises. Analyzing the FSSP's coherence and its embeddedness in French society vindicates the assumption that "dominated" Beveridgean features tend to provide internal resources for a transformation towards a new equilibrium of compromises between its two path dependencies of Bismarckism and Beveridgism. One good example of this is given by the "Contribution sociale généralisée" (CSG) introduced in 1991, that is an important innovation in financing principles which has gradually and increasingly substituted pay roll contributions. CSG, being neither a tax nor a social contribution proper, combines features of both and its taxing base extends to all incomes. Analytically, CSG should be regarded as a typical hybrid resource combining both social contribution and tax. Inasmuch as it is generalised to all incomes (wages, benefits and capital earnings), it undoubtedly bears the characteristics of a proportional tax, given that it is universal and was initially not deductible from taxable income. However many of its characteristics make it distinct: it is partially deductible and strictly earmarked to finance benefits. Moreover it is not a resource of the state budget and is transferred to the social security Fund collecting payroll taxes (URSSAF). Hence, despite it is considered as a tax in French Law, it has been recognized as a social contribution in the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice. The CSG thus emerged as an endogenous institutional innovation that alters the previous internal balance between Bismarckian and Beveridgean principles in favour of national instead of "professional" solidarity. Another recent testimony of this French renewed hybridization is the gradually universalised access to healthcare and family benefits on the mere basis of residency through the institution of a supplementary regime called CMU—universal medical coverage—which is a typical use of a Bismarckian mean to attain a Beveridgean objective .

In summary, compared with Germany, the FSSP's hybrid structure might well have constituted an advantage in confronting the challenges of the liberal globalization and Europeanization. Hybridization between Bismarckian and Beveridgean rationales has been a key factor of change in the FSSP for the last twenty years, conclusion which is

consistent with the possibility of multiple paths of historical dependence. Using as internal resources for innovation its Beveridgean features, the FSSP has till now been able to eschew the polar choice between conservation (continuity) or revolution (radical change). Here resides the French lesson for the theory of institutional change.

5. Conclusion

Socio-economic regulation requires two simultaneous conditions: 1) national systems of social protection and political representation which, together with the ideological, monetary and juridical systems constitute the armature of the mode of regulation, have to fit in with the accumulation and fiscal regimes ensuring respectively the reproduction of the economic and political orders; 2) NSSPs and NSPRs have to combine coherently or compensate each other. Various configurations can meet these conditions and the structural method helps to discover and analyze them in a logically and systematic way, since it is a useful tool to evaluating in a deductive way the potential stability and the differential conditions of viability of the various national modes of regulation.

It is common that scientific ideal-types are also considered as ethical ideal-types (Commons, 1934). Harmonic models are often confused with harmonious models, and recurrently one of them becomes a reference model and is considered as “The model” to follow, the miraculous formula to adopt. Thus we have had the US model, the German model, the Japanese model, the Swedish model, and again the US model. But in times of change and growth of radical uncertainty concerning the future of the economic and political orders at the world and regional scales, when institutional innovation is at stake, virtue may become vice and miracles disasters if transplanted in other contexts than those where they first develop. For the more social systems are coherent, the more change in one part of the system can be dangerous for the whole, according to the incoherence it brings into it, so threatening the “miraculous” institutional complementarity reached. The more social systems are path dependent in a unique way, the more they tend to persevere in their being on the same way, and the less they are able to adapt to and discover new ways of addressing new challenges. The generality of this logical rule suffers one important exception: it is not worth for the dominant societies who are able to impose their model to the others by persuasion, economic coercion, or political violence. And institutional coherence and stable institutional compromises inside are power resources for a conquest of the outside.

On the other hand, this exception aside, in period of international change, the majority of countries which do not benefit of a strong institutional coherence and are not

harmonic but hybrid systems, can transform their institutional vices into virtues in order to maintain their historical and cultural hybrid autonomy without being obliged to reduce their openness.

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